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THE HEBREW TEXT, AND A LATIN VERSION  
OF  
THE BOOK OF SOLOMON,  
CALLED  
ECCLESIASTES;  
WITH  
ORIGINAL NOTES,  
PHILOLOGICAL AND EXEGETICAL,  
AND A TRANSLATION OF THE COMMENTARY OF MENDLESSOHN  
FROM THE RABBINIC HEBREW.  
ALSO  
A NEWLY ARRANGED ENGLISH VERSION OF ECCLESIASTES, WITH  
INTRODUCTORY ANALYSES OF THE SECTIONS;  
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED  
A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

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BY THEODORE PRESTON, M.A.  
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE.

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## THE PREFACE.

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THE object of the following pages is the exhibition and verification of a method of translating and dividing the book of Solomon called Ecclesiastes, which will be found, I think, to contribute not a little towards a complete demonstration of the perspicuity of its language and style, and the uniform accordance of its arguments and conclusions with the general tenor of scriptural doctrine. The manifest imperfection in these important qualities of our received English and other approved versions of it cannot fail more or less to have engaged the attention of their readers, and to have produced a corresponding desire for satisfactory evidence that the same defects do not belong to their original. Such at least had long been the case with myself, and especially since I found, on consulting several of the most distinguished Commentators, that many of the most obscure passages in them had been either totally neglected or very insufficiently explained, and that others, whose sense was apparently at variance with the rest of Holy Writ, had on that account been unhesitatingly construed into a sense nearly the reverse of their primary and obvious one.

I am therefore desirous to express my obligations to Mr Bernard, the learned and accomplished teacher of Hebrew in this University, as well for important assistance in the acqui-

sition of the Sacred Tongue, as for having some time since directed my attention to the commentaries of Mendlesohn on this book. My speedy conviction of their value led me to form the design of rendering them accessible to those of my countrymen who may not possess the opportunity of studying them in the original. In this undertaking I have not been anticipated by any English writer, and the existence of a translation of them by J. J. Rabe, the translator of the *Mishneh*, does not lessen its necessity or importance; in the first place, because he wrote in German; and in the next, because the only edition of his work, published in the year 1771, is not to be met with in this country, and has already become so scarce in Germany that I have not been able to procure a copy of it.

As I proceeded with my task I found not a few instances in which Mendlesohn's annotations, admirable as they are, appeared by no means sufficient, and conceived that by forming an entirely new translation of *Ecclesiastes* I might succeed in combining the results of his explanations with such suggestions on the part of others or myself as might be manifest improvements upon them. This translation I now present to the public. In order that the reader "משכיל בלחק" may as far as possible be satisfied of its correctness, I have given an original Latin version of it on alternate leaves with the Hebrew Text of the book as revised by Van der Hooght and Hahn, arranged for facility of comparison so as for their corresponding verses to be on opposite pages, and below both copious notes, principally original, but partly compiled from various sources, modern and Rabbinic, in which I have fully discussed the passages of which my translation differs from



that in ordinary use, in the endeavour to establish the superiority of the former. Along with these notes will be found at each verse a literal rendering from the Rabbinic Hebrew of Mendlessohn's commentary, which will at once be recognized by the accompanying inverted commas and the addition of his name. Its occasional deviations from strictly elegant English, arising from close resemblance to the original, will, I hope, be atoned for by its being thereby rendered more serviceable to the student of Rabbinic Hebrew, whose advantage is peculiarly contemplated in the following work.

The utility and convenience of the arrangement to which I have alluded will doubtless approve itself to the scholar, and perhaps suggest to others who may possess higher qualifications and greater leisure than myself to edit on a similar plan other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures which require more than ordinary illustration. Such a work would ensure to all readers of the Bible the removal of many obscurities and paradoxes which it now presents to them, the discovery of fresh elucidations and parallelisms, together with a higher appreciation of its classical elegance as well as its majestic sublimity, and to those who have made themselves acquainted with its original language a supply of comprehensive and valuable objects for the application of that knowledge which would render it increasingly valuable. It might appear at first sight that an English version of Ecclesiastes renders unnecessary a Latin one which corresponds with it in sense so closely as mine; but I think it will be found that in many obscure and controverted passages the double version exhibits the sense which I have finally determined to attach to them much more definitely and explicitly than a single one in either language could

do. As instances of this, I would particularly direct attention to chap. iii. from verse 19 to 22 inclusive, and chap. ix. from verse 1 to 13 inclusive, which in the Latin translation I have turned into the *obliqua oratio*, a form of speech in which the English like the Hebrew language is very defective, but which in those places ought to be introduced, in order that the intention of the author may be fairly represented, and that it may be borne in mind in reading them that they express not his own opinions, but the inferences which would necessarily follow from an imperfect view of the Divine government. In other places also, particularly in the 12th chapter, ambiguities unavoidable in the English version are obviated in the other by the greater precision of the Latin tenses and adverbs.

With regard to the division into Sections, and the introductory analyses of my English Translation, I would refer the reader to some remarks at the end of the Prolegomena at pages 93 and 94.

Wherever the Masoretic various readings indicated by the words קרי and כתיב occur, a statement to that effect is made in the Notes to the text.

The editions which I have used in translating Mendlesohn's commentary and the באור המלות, (from which I have extracted various grammatical observations embodied with the Notes) are that printed at Berlin, and dated 1833, or in Jewish figures, ת"ק"צ"ד"ר לאלף הששי, and that printed at Ofenbach, and dated ת"ק"ס"ט" לפ"ק, i.e. 1808.

It now remains for me to say a few words as to the course which I have pursued in the Prolegomena of the following work.

In the first part of it, it has been my principal object to correct certain errors arising from mistranslation or misapplication of passages of Ecclesiastes into which several writers of eminence have fallen with respect to it. Accordingly I have had occasion to notice a chapter of the "Moreh Nevochim," or "Guide of the Perplexed," in which Maimonides quotes it in proof of the future eternal duration of the world, a doctrine seemingly at variance with our belief as Christians; and I have endeavoured to shew that it is quite possible to reconcile with the prophetic revelations of the New Testament the verses (Eccles. i. 4, and iii. 14) as well as others which he adduces, without departing from that method of rigorously literal interpretation which he applies to them and to which like most Rabbinic writers he attaches paramount importance. It is solely therefore for the purpose of exhibiting this possibility and so, in a manner, refuting Maimonides on his own ground, that I have suggested a theory of explanation for those passages, the novelty of which makes it require some apology. At first sight it may appear fanciful or chimerical; and the more so to some readers, because it is based on the most literal interpretation of the prophecies wherein the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine, and the eternity of the Divine favour to them as a nation, seems to be predicted. But, though I am far from adopting it as an article of my creed, I am inclined to think that on closer examination it will be allowed to be at least as reasonable as any definite speculations concerning the visible and material circumstances of "the consummation of all things" can be. The truth of it indeed is necessarily uncertain in the same degree with that of the method on which it is founded; and my

reason therefore for proposing it is not that I hold it to be essentially correct, but merely because it seems to me a sufficiently successful attempt at what I had in view, the establishment of a theoretic agreement between the passages in question by means of that very system of literal interpretation which, if differently applied, as it has been by Maimonides, might lead to the opposite result.

In the latter part of the Prolegomena, along with a sketch of the life of the great Commentator to whom I am principally indebted, I have quoted considerable extracts from his controversial writings which contain the developement of certain opinions with regard to the ancient Jewish polity which may be new and therefore startling to some readers. I wish therefore to state distinctly, that I am neither prepared nor desirous to maintain the truthfulness of these opinions, nor indeed to enlist myself on either side in the controversy connected with them. My only object in introducing these extracts is to give the reader an opportunity of deciding on the justice of an insinuation which has been made, that Mendlessohn was an apostate from the faith of his forefathers. I am anxious that the Biblical annotations of one whom I consider a most successful Commentator, should be received with a prejudice rather in their favour than against them, and imagine that this cannot be more effectually accomplished than by presenting to the reader the very passages which alone can have given rise to the suspicion I allude to, in order that he may perceive that the discussions which they contain are perfectly guiltless of impugning the Divine origin of the Jewish polity, and that he may be convinced by their general tenor, that Mendlessohn's reverence for the religious creed of his ances-

tors and the inspiration of the Scriptures is unimpeachable. For these then, as well as for many other portions of the following work, I crave his indulgence; and venture to commend it to his notice, in the hope that it may not prove an altogether unprofitable contribution to Biblical literature.

TRINITY COLLEGE, *Feb.* 1, 1845.

# ERRATA.

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ
8	20	"we are"	"I am."
12	last	"his"	"its."
28	last	"resort"	"recourse."
29	2	"uncontrovertibly"	"incontrovertibly."
33	9	"בְּדַבְּרֵי"	"בְּדַבְּרֵי."
65	last but two	"הַשָּׂשָׁה"	"הַשָּׂשָׁה."
66	2	"titles"	"tittles."
96	4	"הָלוּל"	"הָלָלוּ."
111	1	"he eat"	"he should eat."
137	3	"סִבֵּב"	"סִבֵּב."
148	6	"cognitonem"	"cognitionem."
159	3	"omne"	"omni."
164	II. 19	"esset"	"sit."
167	2	"laboraverit"	"laboravit."
180	16	"אֶת"	"אֶת־."
183	3	"meros"	"meras."
184	2	"obnoxios"	"obnoxias."
223	6	"hoc"	"hæc."
270	last	"וְרָאָה"	"וְרָאָה."
275	19	"פִּתְגָּם"	"פִּתְגָּם."
281	last but one	"אָמַר"	"אָמַר."
291	10	"eque"	"atque e."
295	last	"Num. xviii."	"Num. xxiii."
295	IX. 12	"fatali"	"exitiali."
335	2	"tremebunt"	"tremement."

## ADDENDUM.

At page 317, after line 8.

"It would have been more usual, agreeably with the above rendering, that the participle עֹשִׂים should have been in construction with לָחֵם, and become עֹשֵׂי; but instances of this kind are found elsewhere, as in Jon. ii. 9, מְשַׁמְּרִים הַבְּלִי שְׂוֹא וכו', 'Those who regard lying vanities, &c.' where מְשַׁמְּרִי would have been more usual. Besides עֹשִׂים refers not only to לָחֵם, but also to יַיִן and כֶּסֶף."



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# PROLEGOMENA,

OR,

## PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

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VIEWED through the medium of the translations commonly in use throughout Europe, the portion of the Bible which forms the subject of the following pages had long presented an aspect singularly perplexing. To general defects of arrangement, connectedness, and perspicuity there seemed added in particular passages an unqualified permission to thoughtless enjoyment of present good on the ground of the utter uncertainty of the future. And it is probable that a similar misconception of the meaning of its inspired author, combined with the record of his frailties and the silence as to his penitence in the annals of the Kings, gave rise to the melancholy legend which Oriental mythology has attached to his name. The attempt had indeed been made to account for the occurrence of the passages alluded to by representing them as ironical. With respect however to that at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth chapters this method is clearly inapplicable; and in the rest it would compel us to recognize an undistinguishable mixture of ironical permission with serious exhortation little in accordance with that correctness of writing (כְּתִיב יֶשֶׁר) which Solomon tells us he had sought to attain, and which shines conspicuously in his earlier writings. His discourses in the book of Proverbs, addressed like this book to mankind in general, consist entirely of grave reproof, earnest warning, or persuasive and encouraging counsel,

a gentler treatment of moral malady than the caustic of irony, whereby its symptoms might be aggravated rather than mitigated, confirmed rather than eradicated. It was therefore most important that the author of Ecclesiastes should be satisfactorily vindicated from the charge implied by those translations of having written obscurely or inconsistently, and the compilers of the Sacred Canon from that of having inserted therein a book unequal with the rest in style and irreconcilable with them in doctrine. This vindication, though undertaken by many an able commentator during successive centuries, had been very inadequately performed, and might till now have remained imperfect, had the ingenuity of Mendlessohn been less happily directed or less equal to his task. It remained for him to bring to light the true order and connexion of the portions of this book, the conclusiveness of its arguments, and the excellence of its doctrines; and to demonstrate that its author, after testing through a life of prosperity the vanity of all earthly enjoyments, discovered at last true happiness to consist in cheerful contentment and in acting conformably to the inevitable doctrine of a future judgment. The learning which this great writer brought to bear upon the subject is regarded by his own nation as almost unrivalled among themselves; and, as he tells us, he has not trusted to his own resources alone in his edition of this "roll," but, at the same time that he has not neglected to consult the commentators "not of the seed of Israel," has introduced all he deemed valuable in the annotations upon it of the distinguished Rabbins of an earlier age, especially Yarchi and Aben Ezra. A translation of his commentary will therefore exhibit specimens of the writings of those laborious expositors on a subject which, as unconnected with the explanation of prophecy, they are most likely to have illustrated without prejudice, and will tend, I think, to convince the reader that in some at least of their commentaries they merit our praise and gratitude for their ingenuity and research, rather than our indiscriminate or un-

qualified censure for defects fairly attributable to their national and educational circumstances.

It is surprising that Mendlessohn's discoveries (for they deserve no less an appellation) with respect to this book should not hitherto have been made more accessible to the English public than they are in the language in which they were originally developed. A translation of his commentary into German appears to have been published about seventy years ago, which is noticed by Rosenmuller in the *Elenchus Interpretum* prefixed to his *Annotations on Ecclesiastes*; but at the time when he wrote his *Scholia* it had probably become already so scarce that he had not the opportunity of consulting it. Otherwise it seems unaccountable that he, who has availed himself of assistance and suggestions from every quarter, Jewish, Patristic, and modern, for the elucidation of the Biblical text, has neglected even to allude to explanations which, for their critical ability and the consistent sense they for the first time exhibit of passages which others have left in hopeless obscurity, are almost unequalled.

A chief excellence of Mendlessohn's commentary consists in his invariable attention to the accents and careful adaptation of his explanations to them. Some of his most important corrections of the translation of difficult passages are based entirely on the interpretation of these marks, which have been doubtless transmitted from the earliest times for the purpose of perpetuating the correct understanding of the sacred text. The judgment of all the literary authorities among the Jews, with the exception of a single grammarian, is in favour of their extreme antiquity, and it is to them that all authentic information on the subject is exclusively confined. I need only refer the reader to the most learned and elaborate work of that profound Hebraist, the younger Buxtorf, "*On the Hebrew vowel-points and accents*," to convince him of the striking concurrence of Rabbinic writers from the age of the *Zohar* to more modern times in the opinion

that they were invented by Ezra and his colleagues when the use of Biblical Hebrew as a vernacular language began to decline<sup>1</sup>; an opinion by which they are referred to an æra nearly a thousand years prior to that to which their introduction is attributed by Elias Levita, and their concurrence in which cannot be justly attributed to prejudice or partiality, since the copies of the Hebrew Scriptures esteemed by the Jews most sacred and as such used in their synagogues have been always without points. And so convinced was Buxtorf of the great importance of the question, that he devoted his whole energies to its investigation, and has done all that the most elaborate examination and careful discussion of authorities could effect in order to decide it finally in favour of that opinion, which he has shewn to be held by the Rabbins almost without a dissentient voice. The author of a dissertation on the book of Jonah

<sup>1</sup> At the end of a chapter, in which he quotes and examines with consummate learning and ability the observations of ancient authors on this subject, he says at page 316: "*Sic plerorumque Hebræorum est sententia, Punctorum Vocalium et Accentuum figuras Esræ tempore vel natas esse, vel renatas; et hunc in finem ab eo vel inventas, vel renovatas et in usum revocatas, ut Sacrosanctum Dei Verbum in posterum, deficientibus Prophetis et invalescentibus populi Judaici calamitatibus, hoc medio tanto purius et integrius ab omni corruptione conservari, ac tanto majore cum facilitate et voluptate a quibusvis legi posset.*" And at page 325, after noticing the high qualifications of the Rabbins who were thus unanimous, and their consequent claim to speak with decision, he thus compares the weight of their testimony with that of Elias Levita: "*Hi omnes*" (sc. R. Saad Gaon, R. Solomon, R. Aben Ezra, R. Kimchi, &c.) "*sane ita sunt comparati, ut nullus illorum sit qui non multis modis Eliam superet, et longe post se relinquat. Hi enim plerique non solum Grammatici sed etiam aliis artibus ac scientiis abundantissime instructi fuere, ut nesciam qua ratione Elias, nudus et merus Grammaticus, illis præferri debeat. Minimus horum digitus crassior est lumbis Eliæ, imo unguis digitorum ipsorum præstantior illius ventre; si in stateram cum ipsis ascendat, vanitate et nihilo ipso levior deprehendetur bonus alioquin Elias.*"

published along with a new version of it towards the conclusion of the last century, can hardly have been aware of the overwhelming amount of testimony he is setting at nought when he states as if it had never been called in question the very account of this matter which Buxtorf had taken such pains to disprove, viz. that the points were not invented or introduced into the text till the Gemara had been completed and the Masora had ended, i. e. during the fifth century of the Christian æra. This statement moreover he has not taken the trouble to distinguish from certain very imperfectly translated sentences out of the Preface to the *Yad Hachazakah* or *Mishneh Torah*, among which he has placed it, thereby giving an incautious reader the false impression that it rests on the authority of Maimonides, and so implying a reflection on the accuracy or candour of Buxtorf, who, if such a passage had existed, ought to have noticed it and fairly discussed it as a most important feature in the controversy. Such misrepresentation, whether intentional or accidental, deserves the severest censure, as tending to a depreciation of the value of the Hebrew Text of the Scriptures; for if it be once conceded that so important a portion of it as the vowel-points and accents was interpolated at a later period, when the Hebrew had become a dead language, and the spirit of inspiration had long ceased from among men, it is impossible that in so far as it is affected by such interpolation it should continue to be regarded with unqualified reverence or unsuspecting confidence. Mendlessohn's opinion is sufficiently indicated by his constant appeal to the accents as a guide to interpretation, and the decided manner in which he recognizes them as a component part of the text, of the faithfulness of the transmission of which there was no reasonable doubt.

The Rabbinic Hebrew in which he has written his commentaries is concise in the highest degree; but in his hands it is unusually elegant as well as devoid of that extraneous admixture of words from other languages which often obscures



the works of Raschi. His style moreover is grave, perspicuous, and cogent in argument, and when he appears to have put forth his energies for the establishment of a particular system of translation he is almost unanswerable. These excellencies render that work of his which I have translated, as well as his elaborate commentary on the Pentateuch, deserving of the attentive study of the Hebrew Scholar.

With regard to the scope and object of the book of Ecclesiastes, Mendlessohn has shewn in the course of his commentary, that while two principal topics treated of in it are the evidences of the immortality of the soul, and the duty of cheerfulness in this life and a contented enjoyment of it, along with a recollection of duties to God who will bring us to account, the discussion of these topics is interspersed with various recommendations, religious, political, and domestic, which come under no general denomination. An attempt, however, has been made by a modern author to demonstrate that the book has one single object, viz. the discovery of the chief good, (an idea suggested by Doederlein). His intention is excellent; but the method he has chosen of carrying it into effect objectionable, if not dangerous. He has followed the example of another writer of undoubted ability, in encumbering and diluting the sacred text with an interpolatory commentary, and consequently has run the risk of mingling the results of an erroneous impression with the very words of divine truth, and so distorting them to a purpose remote from their real intention; and in fact he has been far from establishing his position even by the method in question; a method clearly improper in dealing with any book of classical authority, and much more with that of inspiration. While those remains of antiquity which the preference of subsequent ages has perpetuated through the wreck of time are ever regarded as exemplars too perfect to be interlarded with extraneous and intrusive illustration, the fine gold of canonical Scripture has

been rashly alloyed with the dross of human commentary. Whatever be the character of the published interpretations of the sacred text, so long as they are kept distinct from it, the worst they can do is to misrepresent its meaning, while it remains its own witness, and speaks for itself; but as soon as they are inserted between its words and sentences, truth may be so distorted as to be no longer recognised, and error imperceptibly obtain a sanction by means of the very boldness of its intrusion.

An *a priori* objection to the theory of the above-mentioned author is, that it would seem to involve the hypothesis that the book itself is falsely attributed to the author of it; and that it really belongs to a later age, when the speculations of Greek philosophers had already found their way, and were esteemed, among the Jews. (These speculations, in a great measure, occasioned the formation of the controversial sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees.) Such a theory, if established, might be added to the catalogue of objections which have been made by Eichorn and Doederlein, to the opinion that Solomon was the author of this book, of which Dathe pronounces that they are unanswerable. He says, “*Non Salomonem, sed serioris, ætatis scriptorem hujus libri auctorem esse, post Grotium, qui id ipsum jam viderat, argumentis tam gravibus probarunt Eichornius in Introduct. in Vet. Test. Part III. p. 561; et Doederleinius passim, ut non nisi morosior traditionum antiquarum defensor illud sit negaturus.*” With the opinion of Dathe here expressed I cannot at all agree. Several of the alleged arguments, as I shall shew, are removed by a more correct translation; and others may be applied equally well to prove the contrary hypothesis, viz. that the book is written by Solomon. Let it not be supposed, however, that the opinion mentioned above indicates any scepticism on the part of Dathe or his authorities, as to the canonical authority of the book: it merely expresses un-

certainty to which of the kings of Israel, after David, it is to be attributed; and whether it should not be classed along with the books of Joshua, Judges, and Job, whose authors are unknown, although they be unquestionably canonical. As to the arguments in question, it has been said that, in Chap. iv. 45, allusion is made to the king's successor, and his inability to govern the people; and that if Solomon had been this king, he would have taken measures to prevent his accession to the throne. Now it will be shewn, at the place, in the commentary, that this reasoning is perfectly false. The reference made is clearly only to the popularity of Jeroboam, who was a slave of Solomon's, and drew away the people after him, so that it seemed very likely that, if he did not supplant Solomon on the throne, he might at least succeed him; and Rehoboam is really not alluded to at all. Thus this passage is altogether a strong presumptive evidence on the other side. Again, the passage, "I was king over Israel in Jerusalem," which has been employed as an objection, is the strongest of all arguments in favour of Solomon's having been the author. Besides that the author had already stated himself to be the son of David, we know that David held his court both at Hebron and Jerusalem, whereas Solomon reigned only at Jerusalem, so that this "king" cannot have been David; and after him those who "reigned at Jerusalem" were not kings of Israel, but of Judah, as they are always styled in the Jewish histories of the kings. In fact, Solomon was the only "king over Israel in Jerusalem," and this may be called an undesigned evidence. It has been objected by Jahn that it was "idle to state a fact so universally known;" but, as will be shewn in the commentary, his reason for so doing was to point out that he had greater opportunities than fell to the lot of men in general for pursuing his philosophic investigations. And so, where he says, "I was richer than all in Jerusalem before me," this was not an idle boast, but his



design is to shew that he had ample means for pursuing worldly pleasure, as well as philosophy, to its full extent, and had nevertheless discovered its emptiness and vanity. Again, who was so qualified by his own experience to pronounce "that the making of many books is an endless thing, and much useless study a mere weariness of the flesh"? And, besides, his sweeping condemnation of the female sex, along with the number of 1000, as used in the same passage, are in perfect accordance with what we might have expected from the known life and history of that monarch. As to the difference of style between this and his other transmitted works, this may be fully accounted for by the different nature of the subjects. The Proverbs consists of detached maxims, and the Song of Songs is a series of amatory idyls, replete with mystic meaning, while this book is a treatise, written in the manner of open discussion, on political and moral philosophy. The non-occurrence of the name of Jehovah is a perfectly futile argument, as this is also observable of the Song of Songs, and other books of the Bible. Again, it has been objected that the Talmud affirms that Isaiah wrote his own book, Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes; and again, that Ezekiel wrote Isaiah, and these three. But these two passages explain one another, and shew that all that can be meant by the word כָּתַב *wrote* in these expressions, is either that they "copied and disseminated" these books, or that they "inserted them into the canon of scripture;" for Isaiah and Ezekiel cannot both have been the authors of the book which bears the name of the former. Finally, Eichorn quotes a number of words in this book, which he pronounces to be foreign, and not pure Hebrew. But the Chaldee, Arabic, and Hebrew, having all emanated from the same source, it is manifestly impossible to pronounce with certainty, on a word occurring in so confessedly an ancient book as Ecclesiastes, that it belongs to either of the two former and not to the latter,

because the further we trace these dialects back, the greater will be their similarity: and even supposing some of the words he mentions to be foreign and Aramaic, (several of them are found in the Pentateuch, and are therefore cited erroneously,) Solomon may easily have acquired them through his constant intercourse with the neighbouring nations, or from his foreign wives, especially as this book was written late in life; for he quotes the murmuring people as speaking of himself as an old and foolish king, and comparing him with Jeroboam, to the advantage of the latter. But far more difficult to dispose of than the above objections, would be that which might be derived from the fact of this book being a disquisition on the “summum bonum,” could that be established. It might then be argued with much plausibility, not only that this book is not written by him to whom it is commonly ascribed, but that it is not genuine at all, nor written by a king of Israel, but inserted into the canon at some later period, when the Pharisees and Sadducees had already derived many of their opinions from the Greek philosophers.

We are glad to find that the opinion of the learned and pious Luther, respecting the scope and object of this book, coincides with that of Mendlessohn, except that he takes it to be more limited than perhaps it really is, and does not appear to have noticed how much of it is devoted to a proof of the immortality of the soul, and a future judgment. He pronounces its scope and object to be “the recommendation of the cheerful enjoyment of the good things of this life, along with the performance of known duty.” We find in this, as well as in all his comments on Scripture, various allusions to the abuses of the church of Rome, as might be expected in one whose mind was necessarily so much engrossed with that subject. He speaks as follows, in the preface to his Latin commentary on this book: “Not only is this book one of the most difficult “in the whole Bible, so that no one has yet fully ascertained

“ its meaning, but it has been so distorted by the glosses of  
 “ many unworthy commentators, that it has become almost a  
 “ work of greater labour and importance to clear and vindicate  
 “ the author from the dreamy fancies with which they have  
 “ encumbered him, than to point out his true meaning. There  
 “ are two reasons which make this book more obscure than  
 “ others; one, that they did not perceive the scope and design  
 “ of the author, which, as it is important to bear in mind and  
 “ follow in every sort of composition, so especially is it so here;  
 “ another, their ignorance of Hebrew, and a singularity of phrase  
 “ on the part of the author himself, which is frequently at  
 “ variance with the common use of Hebrew, and exceedingly  
 “ remote from our present mode of expression. The consequence  
 “ has been, that this book, worthy on many accounts to be con-  
 “ stantly in the hands of all, and especially to be much studied  
 “ by persons in high authority, (as a book in which, more than  
 “ in any other part of Scripture, the administration of human  
 “ affairs, both public and private, is graphically treated of) has  
 “ been hitherto miserably neglected and degraded, so that at  
 “ this day we do not derive from it the use or profit which  
 “ we ought to have done. So much mischief has the temerity  
 “ or ignorance of commentators occasioned. Our first business  
 “ then is to ascertain and make ourselves masters of the scope  
 “ of the book, and its object and design; for unless these are  
 “ settled, it will be impossible to understand the style and phrase.  
 “ The main object then of this book is, that Solomon wishes to  
 “ render us calm and cheerful in the common affairs and acci-  
 “ dents of this life, and to teach us to enjoy present things  
 “ contentedly, without care or eager desire about future things  
 “ (as St Paul says, ‘ I would have you without carefulness,’  
 “ ‘sine cura et solitudine agentes’); for that anxiety about  
 “ future things annoys to no purpose; but Solomon infers, by  
 “ a sort of perpetual induction from the vanity and fruitlessness  
 “ of particular pursuits and efforts of individuals, a general con-

“ elusion that all the occupations of men are vain. For he  
 “ says that ‘ the race is not to the swift, nor sustenance to the  
 “ wise, nor the battle to the powerful; and that the more wise,  
 “ holy, and diligent a man becomes, the less he does; and his  
 “ wisdom, justice, and diligence, become useless.’ If these  
 “ things then be of no avail, all things must necessarily be  
 “ vain and fruitless. But here we must first remove the  
 “ erroneous and injurious opinion of many, in thinking that the  
 “ author recommends the contempt of God’s creatures, which  
 “ the tenor of Scripture is far from intending to be despised  
 “ or condemned as injurious. For all things which God has made  
 “ are very good, and made for the use of man, as St Paul  
 “ distinctly states in 1 Tim. iv. 4: ‘ Every creature of God is  
 “ good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanks-  
 “ giving, and it be sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’  
 “ Consequently it is foolishly and impiously that many preachers  
 “ inveigh against glory, power, dignity, wealth, gold, honour,  
 “ beauty, women, expressly condemning God’s creatures. Power  
 “ is a divine ordinance, gold and wealth are given by God.  
 “ Woman is a blessing intended as a help-mate for man.  
 “ God has made them all to be good and adapted to some  
 “ use of man. What is condemned therefore in this book is,  
 “ not the creatures of God, but the depraved passions and  
 “ desires of man, who are not content with the creatures of  
 “ God presented to their use, but are always anxious to ac-  
 “ cumulate wealth, riches, honour, and glory, as if they were  
 “ to live here for ever, spurning at the same time present  
 “ good, and always pursuing one thing after another. For this  
 “ is the height of vanity and wretchedness, to deprive oneself  
 “ of the use of the good things we possess, and to be use-  
 “ lessly anxious about securing future good. These evil lusts,  
 “ I say, and not the creatures themselves, are what Solomon  
 “ here condemns. For as to the use of the creature, he says  
 “ himself, that there is nothing better than to be cheerful and

“enjoy one’s life, and eat, and drink, and delight in one’s  
 “employment; where he would be contradicting himself, if he  
 “also condemned the things themselves, and not rather the  
 “abuse of them, which consists only in human passions. Some  
 “foolish persons, not understanding these things, have absurdly  
 “taught contempt and flight from the world, and have done  
 “many absurd things themselves, as we read in the lives of  
 “the fathers, that there were some who even shut themselves  
 “up from ever seeing the sun, *reminding us of the passage*  
 “*where Solomon condemns him who eats all his days in the*  
 “*dark*, (well they deserved to have their eyes put out) and  
 “for the sake of religion lived in the most sordid plight.  
 “Whereas living above the world is not living out of it. Nor  
 “does he despise money who altogether rejects it, like the  
 “Franciscans, but he who lives in the midst of the world, and  
 “is not carried away by the passions and lusts we have men-  
 “tioned. This is the first thing to be remembered by the  
 “readers of Ecclesiastes. Another thing to be carefully borne  
 “in mind is, that in this book Solomon speaks simply of the  
 “ordinary affairs of life, of the pursuits, and desires, and plans  
 “of men. Let us not then fancy, with the interpreters, that  
 “he intends to condemn natural Philosophy and even Astro-  
 “nomy as vain and useless speculations; whereas these sciences  
 “have great and many advantages which are constantly pre-  
 “senting themselves to us. Besides, enquiry into the nature  
 “of things is not only useful, but very delightful. The sub-  
 “ject matter then of this book is simply ‘the human race,’  
 “which is so foolish, that it seeks and aims at many things  
 “which it cannot attain to; or, if it does attain to them,  
 “does not enjoy them, but has great pain and distress in the  
 “possession of them; a fault not of the things themselves, but  
 “of their foolish passions. If men gain affluence they are  
 “soon disgusted with it; if not, they are insatiably and rest-  
 “lessly desirous of it. So Ovid says :



“Quod licet ingratum est, quod non licet acrius urit ;

“Quod sequitur fugio, quod fugit ipse sequor.

“Nemo sorte suâ contentus vivit ; et intra

“Fortunam didicit nemo manere suam.’

“Such is the vanity of the human heart, that it is never  
“content with the present gifts of God, but, neglecting them,  
“always seeks one thing after another, and never rests till it  
“attain its desires, and then despises them, and looks after  
“other objects still. To return then ; it is the design of this  
“book to teach us to use with thankfulness those creatures of  
“God, which we have in our present possession, which are  
“bountifully given to us and bestowed upon us by the blessing  
“of God, without anxiety about future temporal blessings ; only  
“to have a quiet and tranquil heart, and a mind full of cheer-  
“fulness and contentment with the will of God, as Christ says,  
“‘Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ Well saith Au-  
“gustine, ‘Jussisti Domine supplicium esse homini non contento  
“suis irrequietum animum.’”

The learned Huet and others have asserted that Luther spoke disparagingly of the book of Ecclesiastes ; but the fact is, that the remarks in his Table Talk, which led them to say so, are not with respect to this book, but to that of Jesus the son of Sirach ; indeed, the passage quoted above is sufficient refutation of the assertion. Luther clearly alludes, in this passage, to a eulogy based by St Jerome on this book of monastic or rather ascetic life, wherein he infers from Solomon’s demonstrating the vanity of all human labour, and the false notions with which men pursue happiness, that it is the path of duty and wisdom to fly from the world and live in desert seclusion. A better refutation of this notion could not be furnished than Luther’s preface.

Jerome is not at all singular in having attempted to derive unscriptural doctrines from the book of Ecclesiastes. Some have cited it in defence of Epicurean opinions, and others have taken offence at his reflections on the fruitlessness of

scientific investigation. The Rabbins themselves are recorded in the Talmud to have had great difficulty in reconciling this book with the precepts of the law, and in explaining away its apparent inconsistencies. Beside the reason assigned in the celebrated passage so fully discussed by Mendlessohn and others for their wishing to secrete this book, we find an additional one in the Medrasch Coheleth, fol. 114 *a*. 82 *b*. **לְצַד מִינּוֹת** i. e. "Because they found in it words inclining to heresy," i. e. atheism. Such sentences as these, coming to them with authority only second to that of Scripture itself, the more recent Jewish writers have made the greatest exertions to palliate and elude. As an instance of this I think it worth while to quote the preface to Coheleth of Rabbi Isaac Aramah, (who, A. D. 1492, published the "Five Rolls" with Yarchi's Commentary, and his own), because it is a curious specimen of the old Rabbinic style, and furnishes a more than ordinarily ingenious explanation of the remarkable Talmudic passage to which I have alluded. It is this.

וּאֲנִי זַעֲנִי צִנּוֹתִי בַּסְּפָרִים וּבַחֲבוּרֵי הַמִּפְרָשִׁים סֵפֶר קֹהֶלֶת הָרַשׁוֹנִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים וּמִלֵּאמֹתַי מִתְחַלְקִים אֶל חֲלוּקִים : יֵשׁ מִפְּרָשֵׁי אוֹתוֹ בַּפֶּשֶׁטִּים זֵרִים וְרוֹחֻקִים וְיֵשׁ בְּדַבְרֵי חֲכָמָה שֶׁהֵם נִסְתָּרִים וְעִמּוּקִים וְיֵשׁ ע"ד דֶּרֶשׁ דֶּרֶשׁ בּוֹ חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לְדִיקָה : הַלֵּךְ הַשּׁוֹהֵה שֶׁבָּהֶם שֶׁכֵּלֵם נִדְחָקִים לִשְׁנוֹת אֶת טַעְמוֹ בְּדַבְרֵי מִתּוּקִי' וְלֹא אֶחָד בָּהֶם נָתַן בּוֹ טַעַם לִשְׁבֹּחַ בְּטַעְמֵיהֶם מִפִּיקִים מִן הַסֵּלֶע נֹזֵף מֵאֵל בְּרִיאָה וּמַעַם יֵאֵל מִמִּתְקִים וְלֹא עוֹד אֵלָּא שֶׁנִּמְנוּ וּגְמָרוּ הוֹוִתִּיקִים בִּקְשׁוֹ חֲכָמִים לִגְנוֹז סֵפֶר קֹהֶלֶת אֵלָּא שֶׁמִּלּוֹ תַחֲלָתוֹ וּסּוּפוֹ אֲמֵרוֹת טַהוּרוֹת וּדְבָרִים מְזוּקָקִים וּמְבַל סִיג מְנוּקִים : רֹאה זֶה זֶר וּנְפֹלֵא וְהַדְּבָרִים עִתִּיקִים וְכֹל זֶה אֵינֶנּוּ שׁוֹה לְסַפֵּר כִּזֶּה הַמִּיּוֹחַם בַּפֶּתַח דְּבָרָיו לֹאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּא עָלָיו עֲדוֹת "נֹאמֵר" כִּי הַחֲכָמִים מְבַל אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵינוּ וְלֹאֲחֵרָיו עִם יַחַס אוֹתוֹ לֹאֲבִיר הַרוּעִים נַעִים וּמִירוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל מִשְׁלַת רֹאשׁ מַלְכוּת יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְגַם מִמָּה שֶׁרֹאֶה הַנוֹשֵׂא אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ יִקְוֹר שֶׁהוּא

העליונים העליון שבמיונים ואשר פניו אל פני הגדול שבתכליות שכל זה מחייב שיסודר בתכלית הכוון בהפלגת ההזהר בדבריו מן הסתירה והכפל והמותר ובעולם השמירה והזהירות בקשור חלקיו והסכמת קולותיו וזירור גזרותיו וכוונותיו כי החכם עיניו בראשו לפרש ולא לסתום וטענת כל שוטן וטוען לסתום ולסתום: זאת היתה לי רוב ימי סבה רמה ועלומה שבת מלתי ביתו החולה כאלפיים אמה וכמה פעמים באתי שעריו ומלאתיו בן נעול ואירא הרבה מאד לאחוזי בכפות המנעול: איך הפעם אודה את "כי הטה אוננו לי דפקתי ומלאתי פתח פתוח בין לוח ללוח כמלא כף נחת רוח דחקתי ונכנסתי שטה בשטה ונודמנה לפני דרך קרובה ופשוטה ואם נקלה היא ללכת בה חכמים ויודעים מלאתיה כמואל שלל רב לי ולמקנרים כמוני בדעת ובינה אשר אין להם כרעים לדג על הרי החכמה ולקפץ על גבעות התבונה כי ראיתיה ערוכה בכל עניינים וטעמים ושמור מכל אלו הגמגומים וגם כן כי בכל דרכיה דרכי נועם עבודת הקדש עליהם בכתף ישאו אשר אלו לא נכתבו ראויים הם ליכתב: ועל פי דרכנו למדנו לאות ומלינת ח"ל כי לא מפני קושי מליאות דעתו הטובה אלא המעיונים בקשו לגנוז רק ליראת ההמון לא זו אף זו המאבדים הונה של תורה הממאנים לקבל עולי שקידת העיון והם מבקשים תואנה מפשטי הכתובים הנראי לה כאקראי וכרוב ישראלי ולזה אמר שלא גזוהו כיון שמלאו תחלתו וסופו אשר הם המקומי אשר ידי עם הארץ ממששות בהם יראת שמים אמנם האנשים אשר בתשוקת הלמוד יתפשו אחריו ובכוסף הידיעה יבאו חדריו אין פחדת אליהם כי סמוך לבס בהם יעירו ויעודרו את האהב עד שתחפץ לבד מאשר נגלה להם מראשו וסופו למלא דברי חפץ מכלו.

The translation of which is as follows:

"I, in my humility, have considered the writings and "compositions of those who have commented on the book of "Ecclesiastes, both the more ancient and those of later date, "and have found that they divide themselves into several classes; "some have explained it by strange and far-fetched primary "interpretations; and some by deep and subtle scientific disqui-



“ sitions; and some by the method of recondite interpretation  
 “ have drawn from it just and right doctrines; but the phase  
 “ of resemblance between them is, that they have all been  
 “ forced to alter its sense with glossing expressions, and not  
 “ one of them has given us reason by any sufficient causes  
 “ which he alleges, to give it any higher praise than that  
 “ of ‘a rock which produces wholesome food;’ or ‘a strong  
 “ lion from whence cometh forth sweetness;’” (i. e. something  
 very unpromising, but yet from which good may be obtained by searching for it.) “ And not only so, but these  
 “ pious men have, as it were, put it to the vote and settled, that ‘the sages sought to hide the book of Ecclesiastes;  
 “ but that when they found its beginning and end to be pure  
 “ expressions and tried words and free from all blemish, *they*  
 “ *allowed it to remain.*’ Now this is strange and wonderful, and a thing hard to understand, and all this is inconsistent with a book like this, attributed in the opening  
 “ of it to a man respecting whom came the sure testimony  
 “ of Jehovah, that he was wiser than all who came before  
 “ and after him, even if his father should be compared with  
 “ him, the mightiest of shepherds, the sweet psalmist of Israel, (  
 “ and who was over the government of the head of kingdoms, Jerusalem the holy city. And besides, from what is  
 “ seen to be the subject which is investigated in it, that it  
 “ is the sublimest of all contemplations, and that it holds a  
 “ place above the highest in perfection of wisdom, it was be-  
 “ fitting and consistent that it should be arranged in perfection of order, with an excessive degree of caution in its  
 “ expressions against obscurity and repetition and superfluity,  
 “ and with strong watchfulness and attention to the connexion  
 “ of its parts and the agreement of its portions and the perspicuity of its sections and subjects; for the wise man’s eyes  
 “ are in his head, to explain and not to conceal, and at the  
 “ same time to refute and silence the arguments of every

“adversary and objector. For a long time this was a strong  
 “and powerful motive with me *to give up the research*; I  
 “turned back as it were many miles from the doors of its  
 “house; and many times have I approached its gates and  
 “found it a closed garden and feared very much to take  
 “hold of the handle of the bar. But now I will praise the  
 “Lord, for he hath inclined his ear to me; I have sought  
 “and have found an aperture, as it were, opened to me be-  
 “tween board and board, to supply me with refreshing encou-  
 “ragement,” (this refers to a method of interpretation which  
 he afterwards describes); “I have pressed in and have entered  
 “line by line; and a ready and clear way presented itself be-  
 “fore me, and one which, though it may be easy to walk in  
 “for the wise and learned, I have found as one that findeth  
 “great spoil for myself and those who like me are little in know-  
 “ledge and skill, nor possess ability (literally ‘legs’) to leap on  
 “the mountains of wisdom and bound on the hills of intelli-  
 “gence. For I have observed it to extend to every topic and  
 “meaning *of the book*, and to be free from all ambiguities,  
 “and moreover that in all its paths there are ways of pleasant-  
 “ness, by means of which the service of the Most Holy may be  
 “borne as an easy yoke upon the neck, and that consequently,  
 “though not described in writing, it well deserves to have  
 “been so. By means of it I have been led to perceive the  
 “real sagacity and elegance of *that saying of* our sages of  
 “blessed memory; and that it was not on account of the  
 “difficulty of discovering the real excellence of the book with  
 “reflecting persons that they sought to hide it, but for fear  
 “of the multitude and people in general, who waste the  
 “treasures of the law, and refusing to receive the yoke of  
 “vigorous thought are content to seek profit from primary  
 “interpretations of Scripture which are regarded by the Lord  
 “as utterly unprofitable;” (literally “like dense thickets.” In  
 explaining Scripture the Rabbins often discarded its primary

“sense), and on this account he says that they did not hide “it, viz. because they found with respect to the beginning “and end of it, which are the parts of a book handled by the “fingers of common people, that in these, I say, the fear of “God *was inculcated*. Indeed, those men in whom is the “desire of learning will seek after it; and by earnestly pursuing knowledge will at length arrive at her chambers. “There is nothing to be apprehended from them; for their “heart is established within them; and they will constantly “incite and spur on their own desire of knowledge, until it will “be eager, only from what is revealed to them at the beginning and end, to draw profit from the whole of it.”

Thus Aramah explains what is said in the Talmud, that “the Rabbins allowed the book of Ecclesiastes to remain in the Canon, because the beginning and end of it were found to be in accordance with the law,” in this way; that they did not mean to say, that the middle portions of the book were inconsistent with the law, but that, though they were obscure, it was not at all to be apprehended that the intelligent and thinking portion of the community, who would read the book through with attention, would derive any harm from it; and that as for careless and ignorant people, they, according to their custom, would look only at the beginning and end of the book, which contain no obscurities, and are manifestly, and at first sight, in accordance with the law. This reasoning is ingenious; but it may nevertheless be doubted whether the Rabbins in question saw through all the difficulties in the middle of the book so clearly as to be able to demonstrate that it is all in accordance with the rest of scripture. Even the great Maimonides, in his *Moreh Nevochim*, lib. II. chap. 29, while he is defending Solomon from the erroneous opinion attributed to him by some commentators, that the world has existed from all eternity (that is, in its present state), allows him to be in favour of another doctrine, which we as Christians do not hold,

viz. That the earth is to remain in its present state to all eternity. His words are as follows :

“ Many men who hold our law think that Solomon believed  
 “ in the existence of our world from all eternity. But it is  
 “ wonderful that any one holding the law of Moses should be-  
 “ lieve in this doctrine. And if it had come into the mind of  
 “ one who did not believe the statements of our law, it would  
 “ not be wonderful; but God has shewn that this cannot have  
 “ been the case with Solomon, because all the prophets and  
 “ wise men received his writings *as canonical*, and never called  
 “ them in question, nor even after his death spoke at all dis-  
 “ paragingly of him on this ground, as we find that they did  
 “ with respect to certain ‘strange women,’ and several other  
 “ matters; but what has led men to think so is the fact, that  
 “ ‘our wise men sought to hide the book of Ecclesiastes because  
 “ of the apparent inconsistencies of many of its expressions;’  
 “ and there can be no doubt that that book, taken in its obvious  
 “ sense, contains expressions apparently repugnant to belief in  
 “ the law. But as to the existence of the world from eternity,  
 “ there is no passage to indicate that such was his belief, though  
 “ there is one, it is true, which shews that *he believed that*  
 “ the world will not perish, but last for ever. Because then  
 “ they saw that there was a verse proving the stability of the  
 “ world, they thought erroneously that he believed that the  
 “ world was not created. Now the verse which speaks of the  
 “ future eternal duration of the world is this: ‘The earth abides  
 “ for ever.’ Some have interpreted the expression לְעוֹלָם as  
 “ signifying only for a ‘definite’ time. But I should like to  
 “ know what they will make of the passage which we find in  
 “ David, Ps. x. 4, 5: ‘He has founded the earth on its basis  
 “ that it should not be removed for ever and ever,’ וְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
 “ But if you should say that the expression וְעוֹלָם וָעֶד does not  
 “ demonstrate its eternal duration, but only its duration for a  
 “ definite time, you will necessarily say at the same time, that

“ the Creator will only reign for a definite time, as we find in  
 “ Ps. x. 16 : ‘ The Lord is king **וְעַד** **עוֹלָם** for ever and ever.’  
 “ Now it is generally allowed that **עוֹלָם** does not denote eter-  
 “ nity of duration except when joined with **עַד**. Solomon there-  
 “ fore speaks less strongly than David ; but David furthermore,  
 “ in the 148th Psalm, assures us that the heavens and all things  
 “ they contain will last for ever, and will suffer no change ;  
 “ where he says, ‘ Praise the Lord in the heavens, &c.’ to  
 “ where he says, ‘ he hath established them for ever and ever,’  
 “ **וְיַעֲמִידֵם לְעַד לְעוֹלָם** and he adds, **חֶק נָתַן וְלֹא יִעְבֹּר**, i. e. ‘ be-  
 “ cause the precepts which he has given will not be changed ;’  
 “ where by ‘ precepts’ he intends ‘ the laws of nature,’ i. e. ‘ the  
 “ laws of the constitution of heaven and earth ordained before  
 “ they were created.’ But that they were created, is clear  
 “ from what he says, ‘ he commanded, and they were created.’  
 “ Jeremiah also says, ‘ Thus saith the Lord, who maketh the  
 “ sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and  
 “ the stars for a light by night ; if those ordinances depart from  
 “ before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall  
 “ cease from being a nation before me for ever.’ Here he in-  
 “ forms us that those laws are never to be abrogated, though  
 “ they were at first put into operation by supreme power.  
 “ Solomon says, too, that ‘ all things which God has made,’  
 “ (viz. the world and all things in it) ‘ are stable in their  
 “ nature, although all are created things ;’ for he has these  
 “ words, ‘ All things which God has made shall be for ever ;  
 “ no one can diminish from them or add to them ;’ and he thus  
 “ at the same time states that the world and all that is in it is  
 “ the work of God, and assigns the reason of their eternal  
 “ duration in the words, ‘ There is no adding to them or di-  
 “ minishing from them ;’ as if he had said, ‘ everything which  
 “ suffers change, suffers it either in consequence of some defect  
 “ in it, where there is a want of perfection, or of some super-  
 “ abundance of something not necessary to its perfection ; but



“since the works of the Creator are absolutely perfect, and  
 “no addition or diminution can be made in them, they will  
 “necessarily remain as they are, because there is nothing to  
 “induce change in them’.”

I have asserted in the commentary, in a note on the verse, “the earth abideth for ever,” that the passages which Maimonides appears to take in the sense, that “the heavens and earth are to remain for ever in their present state,” do not necessarily bear that signification. I shall now endeavour to establish this assertion, and shew that these passages are consistent both with themselves and with the rest of scripture. As to the two passages which that illustrious author quotes from the book of Ecclesiastes, it may be confidently affirmed, that, when correctly translated, they will not serve his purpose at all, and that he is consequently one of those (with all due respect be it spoken for so great a name) who have unintentionally perverted and misrepresented the words of this difficult book.

The first of them is far more consistent with the general sense of the chapter, if we take it, with Mendlesohn, to mean that while plants and animals are continually nourished by the earth, and returning again to it by the processes of corruption, the mass or bulk of the earth continues precisely and invariably the same, because not a particle of matter perishes, and nothing (as far as we can conceive) is ever added from without to the mass of the earth, so that the element is going a constant revolution, like air, fire, and water; and the second passage should be translated “all that God appoints (not ‘makes’) is fixed for ever.”

Far more important as respects his argument are the citations which he makes as parallel passages to these two, (for it is the belief of Solomon on the duration of the world that he is discussing). They are, Ps. civ. 5: “He hath founded the earth on its basis that it should not be removed for ever;” which merely expresses the stability of the earth’s motions, and no

more implies that it is absolutely at rest than the word "rise" as applied to the sun, either in scripture or in ordinary conversation, implies that he actually moves round the earth; again, Ps. cxlviii. 1—4: "Praise ye the Lord; praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise ye him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass;" and Jeremiah xxxi. 35, 36: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease to be a nation before me for ever." From these passages in their literal signification, Maimonides evidently collects that the present condition of external and visible things is to continue the same for ever. I would explain them, however, without deviating from the system of literal interpretation which Maimonides adopts, as referring entirely and exclusively to the permanence of the laws and motions of the orbs of our system, not to that of the present face of nature, which is even continually undergoing change, and, as we are expressly informed by the New Testament, is at some time to be destroyed by fire. And such change or convulsions in the mass of the earth are quite possible along with the immutability of the motions and bulk of the earth with reference to the other bodies of the solar system, as the results of geology abundantly testify; and it is this immutability alone that is asserted by the Psalmist, and appealed to by the Lord through Jeremiah. Besides, it is very remarkable that the Lord by his prophet Isaiah appeals to the perpetuity of a new order of



things in heaven and earth, hereafter to be produced, as an evidence of the same eternal favour which in the above passage of Jeremiah he declares to be equally permanent with the laws of heaven and earth. He says, "Behold, I make new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind;" and afterwards, in the lxvith Chapter, "As the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain;" and again, "The heavens may depart, and the earth be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, nor the covenant of my peace be removed." These passages must have escaped the recollection of the great author of the *Morch Nevochim*, or he surely would have discussed them at this place. They can only be reconciled with the above passages from the Psalms and Jeremiah, as well as with the prophecies of the New Testament, when all are taken in their obvious and primary signification, by supposing that a superficial change is to take place in the face of nature, while the laws of the great phenomena of heaven and earth continue unaltered.

In order to establish this theory more fully to the satisfaction of the reader, I would first direct his careful attention to several portions of the prophecy of Isaiah, which, however applicable they be in their secondary interpretation to the prosperity of the Church of Christ, can never, in their primary and obvious meaning, be taken to express anything else than this; that though the nation of Israel be long "forsaken and hated," and "desolate," they do not cease to be the chosen people of God, and that at some future time, however distant, his favour to them will be again openly manifested as it was of old; that "though the mountains depart, and the hills be removed, the Lord's kindness will not depart from them," but that they will be restored to their own land and to all the privileges which they have long forfeited, and that all the nations of the earth, "the Gentiles," will contribute to this consumma-

tion, and thenceforth regard "Jerusalem" as "the holy city," and its inhabitants as "the priests of the Lord," themselves performing the offices of servants, "plowmen and vinedressers" to the holy people; that they will build up the walls of Jerusalem; and, whereas "they had afflicted her, they shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet." This humiliation of the Gentiles before the chosen people must clearly have respect to events to take place in our world and "in time." Such acts of national service and allegiance are inconsistent with the idea of a spiritual state. And we also learn from another passage which has been already quoted, that the peculiar favour of God to Israel as a nation is not to cease with time. The Lord says, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come into mind; but be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, &c." (Is. lxxv. 17).

The passages to which I would direct the reader's careful attention, with respect to the restoration of the Israelites to their own land, are Is. liv., Is. lx. lxi. lxii. lxxv. 17—25, lxxvi. 5—23.

Assuming, then, that the favour of God to the Israelitish race is to be eternal, as the primary signification of these passages unquestionably proves, let us now turn to the verses in Jeremiah in ch. xxxi. the whole of which is to the same effect as the above chapters of Isaiah, and where we find a declaration very much to our purpose: "Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done." In juxtaposition with this most decisive declaration, whose primary interpretation is unquestionable, we have, "Thus saith the Lord, who maketh the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances (*laws*) of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, &c. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease

from being a nation before me for ever." Now here we have the eternal stability of the laws and phenomena of the heavenly bodies with respect to the earth appealed to as an evidence of, and coexistent with, the eternal favour of God to his people Israel as a nation in this world, and to the redeemed of them in the next. If then those laws and phenomena are to be altered or confounded, when the superficial heavens and earth are to be remodelled, (which will not be the case if the earth and planets continue to revolve about the sun,) the prophet would be here appealing to a mutable thing as an evidence of, and coeternal with, the duration of an immutable, and placing the impossibility of measuring illimitable things in the same category with the eternal stability of what is destined to be subverted, viz. that of being equally certain with the endless endurance of God's favour to Israel. On the contrary, according to the hypothesis which I have adopted, the whole of this important prophecy is perfectly consistent, even on its most literal interpretation (which in the words of divine truth ought to be first attended to), both with itself and the revelations of the New Testament; an argument in favour of that hypothesis, which I think it would be difficult if not impossible to remove. It cannot be that in this place, as is the case in several passages of the Bible, which never seeks to reveal physical truths, the Lord is speaking in condescension to the ordinary ideas and language of those whom he addressed. The Jews had no revelation in the Mosaic law touching the eternal stability of the "ordinances of heaven and earth," any more than they had about a future state, or any matters not immediately affecting their temporal interests; but allowing, which is just possible, that such a belief was prevalent among them, arising from the above-mentioned verses in the Psalms to this effect, it cannot be supposed that, if this belief were false, the Lord would thus even indirectly sanction an unmitigated error, in favour of which they had not even the fallacious evidence of the senses. Where

the sun is spoken of as moving round the earth, &c., scriptural language is adapted to common parlance, and is correct in respect to relative and apparent motion; and so of other instances which might be mentioned; but here no such explanation can exist, and therefore no evasion of the literal and obvious meaning. It was not the intention of the Deity in this place, any more than in other parts of scripture, to reveal physical truths, the knowledge of which is not necessary to the well-being of mankind; but that which is incidently involved here cannot, I think, be evaded, or explained away.

The next misapplication which I have occasion to notice of passages in this book is one arising entirely from the defects in our English version. Bishop Warburton in his celebrated book entitled, "The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated," puts the main part of his argument in the following form: (1) "That the ancient lawgivers and the most wise and learned nations of antiquity universally believed, what is undoubtedly true, that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is necessary to the well-being of a civil society, unless it be supported by an extraordinary providence, or, in other words, be a Theocracy; and that if a civil society be not supported by the doctrine of a future state, it can be supported only by an extraordinary providence. (2) That Moses, an ancient lawgiver, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, (the principal branch of which wisdom was inculcating the doctrine of a future state), did institute a civil society which had no doctrine of a future state for its support; and that as Moses did not teach, or rather forbore to teach, the doctrine of a future state, so neither had the people of Israel, at least so long as their civil polity retained its original form, any certain knowledge of it. (3) That the conclusion from these premises is, that Moses believed that the civil polity which he established was supported by an extraordinary providence; i. e. was a Theocracy, and that it actually was so, and continued to be

so, until the people proved themselves unworthy of such a distinction."

In establishing the minor of the above premises, he has occasion to quote several passages of scriptural writers from the time of Moses downwards, in which the existence of a future state, so far from being recognised, appears rather to be altogether denied; thus, that Job says, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more;" and again, "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again—though the root thereof wax old in the ground, and the stock thereof die in the earth, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs, like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? as the waters fall from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake or be raised out of their sleep;" thus, contrary to the argument of St Paul, opposing the revival of a vegetable to the irrecoverable death of a rational animal; and again, that the Psalmist says, "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" and again, "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare thy truth?" and, "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" and in another place, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence;" but besides saying, that the dead forget God, that he goes further, and says, that God forgets them. "I am counted with them that go down into the pit,—free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and are cut off from thine hand;" where the words "free,"



and “cut off,” indicate, as he shows, “utter separation,” and that they are no longer the objects of the divine providence, or moral government; and that Hezekiah says, “They that go down into the grave cannot hope for thy truth.”

Now all these passages are very much to his purpose, because they are evidently spoken with reference to the current belief of the people of Israel at that time, (such as we might have expected it to be from the entire omission in the Mosaic law of any reference to future rewards and punishments, as a motive of faithful allegiance to the divine Ruler), and, consequently, indicate what that belief was; viz. that though the soul might survive the body, it simply returned to God who gave it. But they do not at all prove that eminent individuals among that nation, as for instance, these very writers, held themselves the sentiments expressed in them. That they had a deeper insight into the hidden meaning of the Mosaic law, and had derived more certain knowledge of a future state from nearer converse with the Deity, appears from expressions of their own to a very different effect, where they are evidently recording their own assurance and experimental belief; as where Job says, “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” &c., and the Psalmist, “In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore;” and, “I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.” On the contrary, a passage in the book of Ecclesiastes, which the bishop quotes from our English version, would, if he had rightly applied it, and taken it in connection with the rest of the argument of which it forms a part, when correctly explained, have answered his purpose equally well, without conveying the paradox which it at present does, as it stands isolated in his book; I mean, that the wisest of men in a grave and cool discussion, wherein he states the results of his own reasoning, without reference to popular opinion, should assert “that the dead know nothing at all, and have no more any reward, for that their very memory is forgotten;”



and again, should speak of it as a matter of the most absolute uncertainty, whether the spirit of man has an upward tendency, and a higher destiny, than that of the beast. It will be seen, by reference to my translation, that the wise man in both these places, instead of denying, is using the most subtle arguments he can devise to prove the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, and that it is only on a most imperfect view of the condition of man, that it is possible to come to the conclusions mentioned in those verses.

It is true that when Solomon dedicated his new-built temple, he addressed a long public prayer to the God of Israel, consisting throughout of a solemn petition for the continuance of the old covenant made by the ministry of Moses, (the efficacy of which there was some reason to fear had begun to decline,) and that while he therein states at large the sanction of the Jewish institutions, he speaks of nothing but temporal rewards and punishments, without the least intimation of a future state; but this silence cannot be taken to imply anything with regard to his own belief on that subject. He is there praying for the continuance of a temporal Theocracy, of which temporal rewards and punishments, and not future, are the necessary sanction. But in the book of Ecclesiastes, which is evidently the result of mature deliberation, he endeavours to prove, to the satisfaction of the individual reader, the existence of a future state by the same arguments which uninspired reason would use on that subject. He writes in the way of open discussion, employing, to the best of his ability, that degree of wisdom wherewith he was endowed. But while divine superintendence prevented him from writing what was erroneous, so that his disquisition comes to us with the authority of inspiration, it does not appear to have revealed to him any matters above ordinary human ken; otherwise he would not have had occasion to confess his inability, by all the methods of investigation, to discover the origin of evil, or to have resort to

the ordinary arguments of human reason to demonstrate a future state. Now it is evident that the book of Ecclesiastes, when thus understood, agreeably with Mendlessohn's elucidations, would have proved a far more incontrovertible argument in favour of the bishop's statement, than the garbled quotations mentioned above. If it be true that Solomon has treated the existence of a future state of recompence, as an article of faith in his own time by no means satisfactorily established, or, at least, as one which he was not authorised in taking for granted by any previous direct revelation, and which therefore required demonstration by the deductions of human reason; and if he has accordingly compared the respective merits of various arguments for it, and at last decided that it is best inferred from the fact that it is theoretically requisite in order to explain the moral condition of man in this life consistently with the justice of the divine government;—if all this, I say, be true, (as it will at once be seen to be by a reference to the version of Ecclesiastes which follows) the inference is well-nigh inevitable, that the information of the Hebrews on this subject as a nation, and therefore as derived from the Mosaic law, was extremely limited and imperfect, and that correct and influential speculations concerning it were confined to a few philosophic individuals, and did not extend to the multitude. This inference has been unfortunately lost to the bishop, evidently in consequence of his having neglected in this place to consult the original Hebrew of the verses he quotes, whereby he might have perceived that the sense which the received translation has led him to attach to them, is not permitted by the context.

In pointing out this inaccuracy in Warburton's most learned and conclusive discourse, I hope I may not be suspected of presumptuously attempting to detract in the slightest degree from its incomparable merits. All I have sought to shew is, that the argument which he has so incontrovertibly established, might in this particular article of the proof have been more

ably and successfully supported, had he considered a little more carefully the nature and design of the book of Ecclesiastes, which in fact bears at least quite as much upon his subject as that of Job, to which he devotes so much space.

Mendlessohn states in his preface, that the commentators who had preceded him, had given no attention to the connection of the verses of the book of Ecclesiastes, but had treated them as separate and unconnected maxims, thereby abusing the division into verses, which was originally intended merely to facilitate reference to a word or passage. This error seems to have been of very ancient date, and to have given rise to the misunderstanding and consequent misapplication of many single verses, which when explained by means of the context, bear a totally different sense from that in which they were quoted. Thus the verse, "Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment," cannot be taken by itself, the rest of the passage of which it forms a part being absolutely necessary to its explanation. The context shews it to be nothing but a recommendation to man, if his only portion be in this life, to make the enjoyment of it his sole and unceasing study, and to indulge himself in every possible species of luxury and comfort, but only if that be the case. The writers of the Babylonish Talmud, however, and after them Maimonides, have employed the verse as an isolated maxim, and based upon it the doctrine of the duty of a constant state of penitence for sin, as the best preparation for death, which may overtake us at any moment. (White garments, it must be observed, were then, as they are with the Romish church, the sign of penance.) The passage in the Babylonish Talmud, Treatise Schabbas, sect. xxiii. is this, "Rabbi Eleazar used to say, 'Repent one day before thou diest.' On his disciples asking him, 'How can a man know the day on which he is to die?' he said to them, 'So much more ought he to repent to-day lest he die to-morrow, and consequently he ought to be

engaged in repentance all his days,' according as Solomon said, 'Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment'." And then follows a parable in illustration of this by Rabbi Jochanan, wherein he describes a number of guests invited to a feast without the time being appointed; and some of them kept themselves constantly dressed and in readiness, knowing that in a king's house a feast might be served at a moment's notice; while others went about their own business, thinking that because a feast takes time to prepare, they would surely have time to dress; the king summoned the guests suddenly, and then those who were not dressed had to stand and look on while those who were dressed feasted.

Maimonides' remarks on the subject of penitence are to the same effect. Similarly, Maimonides employs another verse, which occurs in the same passage with the above, as an isolated maxim and an absolute truth, whereas it in fact contains nothing but a false hypothesis, (as Mendlesohn has ably shewn in his preface and commentary,) and takes **לְ** to mean "for," where it can have no other meaning to suit the context but "if," or "for that," which in an argument may mean the same as "if." We mean the verse, "If there be no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, &c." which the context clearly implies is far from being the case. The passage in question in the *Yad-Hachazakah* is translated by Mr Bernard in his *Selections* from that book, and is very interesting, as shewing what I have already stated, that the more pious and intellectual of the Israelitish nation comprehended the hidden meaning of the Mosaic law, so as to perceive its institutions to be types of a future state, and its precepts instructions how to prepare for that state. He says, "What means that which "is written through the whole of the law, 'If ye obey, such "and such things shall come upon you; but if ye obey not, such "and such things shall befall you;' all these being things which "relate to this world, as for instance, plenty or famine, war or

“ peace, kingly power or degradation, possession of the land or  
 “ captivity, success in enterprise or total ruin, and other worldly  
 “ concerns? Now all these things actually have come to pass,  
 “ and will again come to pass, so that whenever we fulfil all  
 “ the commandments of the law, all the good things of the  
 “ world are to come upon us, and whenever we trespass against  
 “ the same, the evil things recorded in the law are to befall us.  
 “ But still these good things are by no means to be the ultimate  
 “ reward bestowed for the fulfilling the commandments, nor  
 “ these evils to be the ultimate punishment inflicted on him  
 “ who trespasses against all these commandments. But these  
 “ blessings and curses ought to be understood as signifying,  
 “ ‘ If ye do serve the Lord joyfully, and keep his way, he will  
 “ bountifully diffuse over you all these blessings, and remove  
 “ from you all these curses, so that ye may live at leisure  
 “ and ease, grow wise by the law, and employ yourselves in  
 “ studying and fulfilling the same, to the end that ye may  
 “ attain unto the life of the world that is to come,’ ‘ that it  
 “ may be well with thee’ in that world which is altogether  
 “ good, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in that world  
 “ which is to endure very long; and consequently ye will par-  
 “ take of the blessings of both worlds, namely, of a happy life  
 “ in this world, such as will also serve to bring you into the life  
 “ of the world to come; for if a man were not to acquire wis-  
 “ dom and perform good actions here below, he would have no  
 “ means of rendering himself worthy of the blessings of the  
 “ world to come, seeing that it is said, ‘ For there is no work,  
 “ or device, or knowledge, or wisdom in the grave.’ But if ye  
 “ forsake the Lord, and are absorbed in carnal pleasures, he  
 “ will bring upon you all these curses, and remove from you  
 “ all these blessings, so that your days shall be wasted in con-  
 “ fusion and terror, so that ye shall neither have peace of mind,  
 “ nor perfect good health, such as are requisite to enable you  
 “ to fulfil the commandments, to the end that ye may forfeit



“your lives in the world to come. And consequently ye will  
 “have forfeited both worlds, inasmuch as when a man is troubled  
 “in this world with illness, war, or famine, he can neither em-  
 “ploy himself in the pursuits of wisdom, nor in fulfilling the  
 “commandments, which are the only means of attaining unto  
 “the life of the world to come.”

Again, we find that the Rabbins based on Eccles. xii. 12,  
 “But more than these (*the words of the wise*) is to be well  
 advised in practice,” their hackneyed phrase **בְּנֵי הַזֶּהֶר בְּדַבְּרֵי**  
**מוֹרָה** **סוֹפְרִים יוֹתֵר מִדַּבְּרֵי תוֹרָה** “My son, attend or take heed to  
 the words of the scribes more than to those of the law;”  
 where, by “the words of the scribes,” they intended the oral  
 tradition recorded in the Mishna and Gemara. We may here  
 mention that there are several strong expressions of the Jewish  
 sages to the same effect. Thus, when Rabbi Eleazar was on  
 his death-bed, and some of his disciples asked him to teach  
 them the way of life, that they might so attain the life to  
 come, he replied, (vid. Cod. juris Berachoth, fol. 28. II.),  
**הַזֶּהֶר בְּכַבּוֹד חֲבֵירֵיכֶם וּמִנְעֵי בְּנֵיכֶם מִן הַהֲגִיִּין וְהוֹשִׁיבוֹם בֵּין**  
**בְּרַבֵּי הַחֲכָמִים** i. e. “take heed to honour your fellow-disciples,  
 and turn away your children from biblical study, and place  
 them between the knees of the sages;” where the gloss of  
 a commentator informs us that **מִן הַהֲגִיִּין** means **לֹא**  
**יִתְּרִגְלוּם מִקְרָא יוֹתֵר מִדְּאֵי** “Ne assuefaciatis vos in lectione  
 biblicâ plus quam satis est.” And so in the Jerusalem Talmud,  
 Berachoth Captitor, fol. 121, **רַבָּא אָמַר תִּדְּע לָהּ שְׂדֵבְרֵי**  
**סוֹפְרִים חֲבֵירִים מִדַּבְּרֵי נְבִיאִים**, Rabba said, “Know that the  
 words of the scribes are more lovely than the words of the  
 prophets;” and the reason assigned for the common phrase,  
**הַחֲכָמִים עֲדִיפִים מִנְּבִיאִים** “sapientes præstantiores sunt prophetis,”  
 was, “that the prophets were obliged to confirm their doctrine  
 by miracles and signs,” but of the sages it is absolutely and



simply said, Deut. xvii. 10, "Thou shalt observe to do all that they shall teach thee."

Mendlessohn has unquestionably done more than all other commentators put together towards vindicating Solomon from past aspersions on his consistency with himself and the rest of Scripture, and preventing false inferences from his writings for the future. With his exception, those who have done most towards the elucidation of this book, have not been those who have edited it separately, but those who have published voluminous and learned editions of the whole Bible, as Dathe, Michaelis, and Rosenmuller, especially the latter, whose work is one of unrivalled merit and execution.

Desveux, who published a heavy quarto edition of this book, has done little for it. His new version and analytical paraphrase are immeasurably inferior in accuracy and clearness to our biblical version, and therefore had better have been dispensed with. His philological notes contain much valuable, though occasionally inaccurate, information. They are unfortunately so ill arranged, that the absence of an index greatly impairs their utility. There is one striking point of contrast between this learned author and Mendlessohn. While the former devotes nearly the whole of his attention and research to the discovery of new readings, by means of which he hopes to present a more intelligible version of the book to his reader; Mendlessohn, who from his Jewish education, and profound erudition, was best of all men qualified to form a decisive judgment on the subject, had such a scrupulous veneration for the recension of the Masora, and the received text of the Old Testament, that both here, and in his edition of the Pentateuch, he disturbs not a single vowel-point or accent, but invariably shapes his interpretation agreeably to them; nor did he, with philological and antiquarian ostentation, ransack libraries and travel in search of MSS. and copies, or pretend to supply chasms, prune redundancies, or alter readings. Accordingly, the Masoretic text is

closely followed in the following version and annotations ; and I have simply made it my business to elicit the most lucid and consistent sense from it, and to establish the renderings finally determined on by the most satisfactory arguments I could devise. The result has invariably been, that however unpromising or impracticable some verses appeared at first, the more patiently and accurately they were considered the more did they gradually approve themselves as the true readings, till at last they were found to yield a clear meaning in perfect accordance with the sense of the context. This is far from being the case with confessedly corrupt passages in classical writers, and is therefore a strong testimony in favour of the excellence and accuracy of our Hebrew text. For some time I was inclined to think that a better sense might be obtained in xii. 10. 11. by a different division of those verses, i.e. by altering the place of the פסוק (:  $\overline{\text{פ}}$ ) between them, and placing it before the last two words of 10. ; but closer consideration convinced me of the correctness of the text..

As for the version of the Septuagint, though it be too close a rendering of the original to be good Greek, or even sense, in many places, it is sometimes valuable as shewing what the readings were in the copy from which that version was made ; but still it must be recollected that the first interpreters, whoever, and in whatever number they were, translated none but the first five books of Moses. The other books of the Old Testament were translated at different times and by different hands, as appears from the difference of the style and method ; so that marginal notes to the Septuagint in general, intended to illustrate one passage by another, can be of little use. The interpreter of this book, as is constantly the case in Aquila's version, makes no allowance for the difference of the genius of the two languages, but renders literally, and word for word ; and even translates a Hebrew word which bears different senses in different places invariably by the same Greek word, which does not admit of the same modifications of meaning ; thus he renders

“**לִּ**” by “**συν**,” where it is merely the sign of the accusative case, as well as where it is used as a preposition.

I will give a few instances of his style, and of the inferences which may be made with regard to the Hebrew copy from which he translated. He renders ch. v. 7. “**ὅτι ἐν πληθεί ἐνυπνιων**,” κ. τ. λ.... “**ὅτι τον θεον φοβοῦ**.” Now to render **כִּי** invariably “because” or “for,” (Græce “**ὅτι**,”) would make nonsense of half the Bible. It is an adverb which bears every variety of sense, and here signifies in the first place “for,” and in the latter, “but,” (as I have rendered it,) or, as some commentators have taken it, “surely.” Again, in ver. 1, we have “**καὶ ἐγγυς του ἀκουειν, ὑπερ δομα τῶν ἀφρονῶν θυσια σου ὅτι οὐκ εἰσιν εἰδοτες του ποιησαι κακον**,” which is perfect nonsense; and yet the Greek and Hebrew words, taken separately, correspond each to each, except with respect to the word **σου**. Here his copy must have read the affix **ךָ**. In x. 4, he renders **נֶפֶשׁ כִּי** by **ιαμα**, which was probably the only rendering he knew of the word, but in this place makes no sense at all. In xii. 10, he places “**γεγραμμενον**,” as if it agreed with “**λογους**,” at any rate, if **γεγραμμενους** be not substituted for it, there is no construction. It is quite clear that his copy cannot have been a Masoretic one (and this is some evidence in favour of the opinion of the more recent date of the Masoretic text, maintained by Elias Levita, who attributes it to the synagogue of Tiberias, and an age subsequent by two centuries at least to the Christian era, whereas the judgment of antiquity is in favour of its ascription to Ezra and his colleagues); for in several places, where, according to his custom, he has put words together that make no sense, rather than alter a single letter in his Hebrew copy, it manifestly must have differed from the Masoretic text. The above passage in verse 1 of vth chapter, is an instance of this. Again in ii. 3. he writes “**ὡς οἶνον**,” regardless of the sense, (where we have “with wine” from **בְּיַיִן**) so that his reading must have been **בְּיַיִן**. In ii. 12, he has

“*συν τα ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτην*,” as a rendering of אֶת-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂהוּ, so that he must have read עָשָׂהוּ, and understood these words to mean, “what he” (*the king*) “did before,” not “what they” (*others*) “did before.” In vii. 15, he has “*ἐστὶ δίκαιος ἀπολλυμένος ἐν δίκαιῳ αὐτοῦ*.” Here he must have read בְּצִדִּיקוֹ, instead of בְּצִדְקוֹ, and has rendered literally, though it was as evident then, as it is now, that ἐν δίκαιῳ made no sense. He must have had some strangely different reading at viii. 12, “אֲשֶׁר הָמָא לֹו עֲשָׂה רַע מְאֹד וּמֵאֲרִיךְ לֹו,” which he renders *ὅς ἡμαρτεν ἐποίησε το πονηρον ἀπο τότε και ἀπο μακροτητος αὐτῶν*. As this passage stands in our Hebrew text, it is a very difficult one, because we have to supply פָּעַם (*times*) after מְאֹד to make it signify “a hundred times,” and אֱלֹהִים before מֵאֲרִיךְ. Probably he read מֵעַת (עַת *tempus*), since the next passage which we shall mention suggests the idea that the interpreter may have rendered the text from the Hebrew as read to him by another, when such a mistake might easily arise. And in the word מֵעַת he must have regarded מֵ as the preposition “from,” as well as the מֵ in מֵאֲרִיךְ; and the rest of the word, which he perhaps read אֲרִיךְ as Symmachus does, as a substantive denoting “length;” and as for לֹו, it cannot be said how he disposed of it. The passage we allude to, where perhaps his ear deceived him, is x. 10, where he has *και αὐτος προσωπον ἐταραξε*, as a rendering of וְהוּא לֹא פָנִים תִּלְקַל where he must have read תִּלְחַל, which is similar in sound to תִּלְקַל, and derived it from חִיל or חָלַל, which both mean sometimes *ταρασσειν*; but as no sense can be made of that rendering, he might have suspected its genuineness, had not his scheme been here, as elsewhere, merely to give for every Hebrew word which he found in his copy a particular Greek word which he had fixed upon as equivalent to it, and to retain this invariably, without enquiring whether the general sense of the version corresponded with that of the original.

The version of the Vulgate cannot be of much service in the elucidation of so difficult a book as the present, because its author, St Jerome, does not appear to have been deeply versed in the Hebrew language, and, consequently, followed the Septuagint version wherever he met with any difficulty; and he lived at an age when as yet little had been done for the elucidation of the difficulties of the Old Testament, and before those distinguished commentators flourished, from whom Mendlessohn has so largely drawn, as he himself informs us in his preface that he has done.

Those commentators of whom Mendlessohn speaks in the highest terms, and who are confessedly, with Kimchi, the first of Jewish literati, are Yarchi and Aben Ezra. The first of these, the most voluminous of Rabbinical commentators, is usually designated by the word "רשי" a contraction for רבי שלמה בן יצחק, and the name "Yarchi" has been given to him rather by a most unaccountable common use, than for any assignable reason. Some have even devised the far-fetched reason that he was born at Lunel, a town in Aquitania, (which however was not really the case), and that he was called ירֵחַ because יָרֵחַ in Hebrew means the moon, "luna," so that he was "quasi lunaris." He was, in fact, born at Trevis, or "Augusta Tricassinorum," in France, as authors of high authority say, in the year 1030, and that he lived seventy-five years. This makes it very remarkable that Moses Maimonides, who was born in 1131, and is generally unsparing of his panegyric, hardly makes any allusion to him. The only probable mention of him in his writings is where he says that he had abstained from writing certain commentaries, from finding that he had been anticipated by a Gaul. We can only explain this silence by the fact that Maimonides had a strong prejudice against the French Rabbins, which may have prevented him from giving Raschi the attention which he deserved. He warns his son against them in one of his letters, telling



him that, though they studied the Talmud diligently, they were sensualists, and indulged their bodily appetites. He says, (*Gaul*) : **וְשִׁמּוֹר נִפְשָׁה מְאֹד מְדַבְּרֵי רֹב חֲבוּרֵי אֲנָשֵׁי צִרְפָּת :** and ends thus, **אֲלֵהֶם עֲבוֹד , וְתוֹרָתָם שְׁמֹר , וּמִהֶם הִרְחַק ,** ואל-תִּתְחַבֵּק חֵיק : His remarks do not apply in justice to Raschi, who was remarkable for his purity of life ; but nevertheless he includes them all in this sweeping condemnation. At the same time he recommends Aben Ezra's writings to his especial study. Raschi wrote commentaries on nearly the whole of the Talmud, as well as the whole of the Bible ; and his interpretations are esteemed above all others. Their style, however, is very concise and obscure, with a frequent mixture of French words ; and several commentaries on his writings have been published. He was called "**הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדוֹל**," "the great light," and "the light of the captivity," and also *κατ' ἐξοχην*, "**מְפָרֵשׁ הַדֵּת**" "interpretes legis," also **רֹאשׁ שְׁבִטֵי יְהוּדָה**, from the letters **רשי**, i. e. "princeps tribuum Judæ."

Rabbi Abraham Ben Meir Aben Ezra (Aben is Arabic for grandson) was the first of Jewish literati, and the best Hebrew scholar that ever lived. He died in the year 1194, aged seventy-five, (*eleven years before Maimonides*.) He was born at Toledo, in Spain. He lived at Rhodes in the latter part of his life. Maimonides eulogizes him in the highest degree. He is far superior to Raschi in perspicuity and elegance of style. He wrote on grammar, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, and many commentaries on the Bible and Cabala, as well as poetry.

The preface of Mendlesohn to his commentary, wherein he states his obligations to these and other distinguished commentators, is well worthy the reader's attentive consideration, as furnishing a correct statement of the several methods of interpreting scripture in use among the Jews, and the reasons the Rabbins had for adopting them, and containing likewise valuable



remarks on several passages of this book, which do not occur in his commentary. Allowance must be made for the almost religious veneration with which he, as well as the rest of his nation, regard the Rabbins quoted in the Talmud and Zohar. He always takes it for granted that whatever they said or did implied the deepest and most comprehensive wisdom, and therefore makes it his business to discover their implied meaning. Of the Rabbinical writers of later date he ventures to speak more freely.

Before I lay his preface before the reader, I shall give a sketch of the life and opinions of this distinguished man, which I have chiefly compiled from M. Samuels.

Moses Mendlessohn was born in September, 1729, at Dessau in Germany. According to the then prevailing system of educating Jewish boys, Mendlessohn was sent to the public seminary, where children were taught to prattle mechanically the Mishna and Gemara, concerning laws of betrothing, divorce, legal damages, sacerdotal functions, and other similar matters above their comprehension, before they were able to read and understand a single text of scripture correctly. Mendlessohn, however, was not like other children; already at that tender age, the spirit of inquiry stirred within him, and he apprehended that he was not pursuing the proper course to arrive at solid knowledge. Finding that without knowing the Hebrew language grammatically, it would be out of his power to see his way clearly through any Commentary, it being impossible to verify the rules and directions laid down by the later commentators, without knowing how to trace the outlines marked by the primitive teachers; he resolved to make scripture his principal study, and to use himself to write Hebrew with purity and elegance; an accomplishment which he seems not to have been long in acquiring; for before his tenth year he had composed Hebrew verses, which however, when he arrived at a riper age, so little pleased his taste as a critic, that he would

never after compose another line of original poetry in that language. "I have no genius for poetry," he would say. "My mind is more disposed to penetrate into the deep recesses of the understanding, than to roam in the lighter regions of fancy." Nevertheless his metrical translation of the Psalms, and other scriptural books, are splendid proofs of his eminent knowledge of the art of poetry, although he himself had but a mean opinion of his powers in this respect; witness the letter he wrote to the celebrated bard, Professor Rammler, in which he requested the professor to let the Psalms undergo the ordeal of his examination, before they were published. Thus industrious, Mendlessohn soon made himself master of the text of the Talmud, under the public tuition of Rabbi David Frankel, then chief Rabbi at Dessau, and of Scripture, without any teacher at all. And it has been asserted, by a creditable person who associated with him in his youth at Berlin, that he knew nearly the whole of the Law and the Prophets by heart.

At that time Maimonides' *Moreh Nevochim*, (i. e. the Guide of the Perplexed), fell into his hands. To discover its transcendent beauties, and to strain every nerve in studying it, was one and the same thing with him. He meditated on it by day and night, till he had dived into the depth of its sublime thoughts; and, to his last moments, he acknowledged the benefit he had derived from this work. In early life he struggled with various difficulties, not only in the pursuit of knowledge, but even of a bare subsistence. He was not, however, doomed to pine all his life in obscurity and distress. Mr Bernard, an opulent man of the Jewish persuasion, hearing of Mendlessohn's talents and high moral character, admitted him into his house, and intrusted him with the education of his children. His salary now enabled him to supply his deficiency in books, and to take lessons in the Greek language, with which he had been hitherto unacquainted; while he devoted, as usual, his leisure hours to study and meditation. There was not a branch of

mathematics to which Mendlesohn did not apply himself; his knowledge of algebra, fluxions, and judicial astronomy, is said to have been considerable; and in general and natural history he was far above mediocrity.

The great mass of Jews in Germany and the surrounding countries, were, at that period, most deplorably deficient in education and useful knowledge. Even ordinary information and reading had almost vanished from amongst them, and few could be met with who knew Hebrew grammar, fewer still who knew that of any other language. Unsophisticated theologians and logical Talmudists too, had become perceptibly scarce in proportion as the vice of wandering from good sense, and the intelligible precepts of the primitive doctors,—of harping incessantly on philological quibbles, conjuring up doubts, inventing hypercriticisms, and interposing obstructions, when the straight and level road lay before them,—had got the ascendancy. The advantages of subtleizing the understanding, and sharpening the powers of perception, usually pleaded in favour of this practice, did not, by any means, outweigh its pernicious effects in disfiguring truth, so as even to render it indiscernible. Far-fetched and distorted quotations, arbitrary and preposterous definitions, together with eccentric deductions, became the grand points of Talmudic excellence, and the main qualifications for Rabbinical fame and preferment. A mind like Mendlesohn's must have been long disgusted with this folly; and at length he felt an irresistible impulse to warn the youth of his nation against this corrupt system, animate them to study grammar and literature methodically, and lead them in the path of rational inquiry, the only object of learning, in order that there might be, in future, fewer Talmudical mountebanks, and more solid scholars. His principal aim was to operate the cultivation of his brethren by means of Scripture; a method which has been strongly recommended by several of his learned successors. Scripture forms a Jew's religious and civil code, and is, con-

sequently, the source of his most important knowledge; useful truths, when conveyed through this medium, make the deeper impression, and become in a manner sacred to him. To this end he wrote his admirable translation of the Pentateuch, with a most elaborate commentary, which has since been the basis of religious and moral education with the Jews. Besides, he was ten years occupied on a metrical translation of the Psalms of David, with an ingenious preface on Hebrew poetry and music; to these must be added his translation of the Song of Songs, and his commentary on Ecclesiastes.

His love for his own nation was intimately united with his love for the religion of his ancestors; but while he lived and died a conscientious and consistent supporter of the doctrines of that religion, he invariably expressed in his writings the greatest veneration for the religion and morality of the New Testament: if he could with truth be called a free thinker, it was on this subject alone. He says, "I never openly controverted the Christian religion, nor will I ever engage in a controversy with any one of its sincere followers. And lest it should be said of me, that by that declaration I mean, as it were, to give to understand that I am well provided with formidable weapons, wherewithal to combat that religion, if I were so inclined, and that the Jews may possibly be in possession of secret traditions, of records now become scarce and unknown, whereby historical facts would be made to appear in a light different from that in which they are represented by Christians; in order once for all to remove all suspicions of that kind, I herewith affirm, before the public, that I have at least nothing new to bring forward against the faith of the Christians; that, for aught I know, we are acquainted with no other accounts of the historical facts, and can produce no other records than those which are universally known; and that I, on my part, have nothing to advance that has not been said and repeated

“innumerable times by Jews and Theists, and answered over and over again by the other party.”

Again, in writing to one who had claimed him as a Christian on account of such expressions, he says, “You seem to think it somewhat extraordinary, that I, a Jew, should speak in a respectful manner of the religion of Jesus, that I do not hate the Christians, and launch no invectives against them; I therefore suppose that you give few if any of my brethren credit for that sort of discretion. Aben Ezra throws out only a few cursory remarks on the Christian religion. Maimonides, to my knowledge, never wrote against it. I readily and cordially agree with you in what you say of the morality of the New Testament. Christianity like yours, Sir, would transform earth into a paradise; it is merely another name for the purest system of Ethics. I was somewhat surprised at your question, why I did not seek to make proselytes. The duty of converting evidently arises from the principle, that out of the pale of the established church no salvation is to be expected. Since I as a Jew am not bound to adopt that position, as according to the doctrine of the Rabbins it is possible that the good and virtuous of all nations shall enjoy eternal felicity, the reason for proselyting falls to the ground. We certainly think our external religion the best of all external religions, because we believe it to be divine; but it does not thence follow that it is absolutely the best. It is best for us and our posterity. What external religion may be best for other nations perhaps God has announced to them also through prophets. The same principles of internal religion must be common to all.”

As Mendlessohn, however, was accused of being sceptical as regarded the faith of his own nation, it is desirable to lay before the reader a statement of the origin of those charges. Mendlessohn will thus be seen to exculpate himself, at the same time that he gives us a view of the Jewish dispensation which comes to us on the authority of one who, from his education and



learning, and the direction of his studies, which for years were entirely devoted to the Pentateuch, must be eminently qualified to speak with decision.

It is clear from the passage last quoted, that it was his opinion that Judaism admits of no religious intolerance, or authoritative interference with the creed of those who profess it. Accordingly when Von Dohm, in his celebrated treatise on the Condition of the Jews as citizens of the state, "recommended that the elders of the synagogue should be invested with the power of punishing every Jew who deviated from the essentials of his creed with anathema, excommunication, and expulsion from their congregations, his spirit was roused to reply, and he did so in his preface to a translation of Manasseh Ben Israel's, "*Vindiciæ Judæorum*." He there discusses the question, "whether it be proper to give men the power of arraigning and punishing others for their religious opinions." (It is to be remembered that through this controversy he is speaking as a Jew, and that where he speaks of a church and its authority, he always means a Jewish church.) He says, "Civilized society requires of its members two things, "rectitude of conduct, and purity of intention, as the foundation of confidence and security in all mutual transactions through life. With regard to the public conservation of the "first, 'rectitude of conduct,' it belongs to the magistrate, "whose province it is to punish the offender, and to right "the injured. The magistrate being thus invested with authority by the sovereign, it can make no difference to us "whether he be of this or that religion; for so soon as we "behold him on the judgment-seat, it behoves us to trust to "him to execute even justice to all alike, whether Jews or "Gentiles. The patient on the bed of death takes whatever "the physician prescribes, without enquiring whether he believes "in the God of Israel or no, because he knows that, as far as "he is concerned, all the physician's business is to cure the



“ sick, and give relief, if possible. And if we act thus where  
 “ life and death are concerned, we may surely in matters only  
 “ relating to property and external things, place our reliance  
 “ on the constituted judge, without fear that a difference of  
 “ belief will influence his decision. On the other hand, the  
 “ second requisite for the well-being of society, ‘purity of in-  
 “ tention,’ is vested in the heart of every rational being; it  
 “ does not depend on the will, but on the understanding; and  
 “ is therefore not subject to magisterial controul, nor ought its  
 “ opposite to be liable to punishment by the hands of man.  
 “ What sensible person would pretend to reform his neigh-  
 “ bour’s thoughts, or to chasten his heart by coercion? If  
 “ we meet in society with a man with a froward heart, with  
 “ wild and improper notions on the fundamental points of re-  
 “ ligion, we have no other power, but to reason with him in  
 “ a mild and conciliatory manner, and to try to persuade him,  
 “ by patient argument, to dismiss his erroneous opinions, and  
 “ return to the wholesome doctrine; and to persevere in this,  
 “ until we are certain that the delusion has left him. If we  
 “ find him incorrigible, it will be better to discontinue our efforts,  
 “ lest we should convert a sceptic, who had at least the merit  
 “ of sincerity, into a hypocrite and a liar. Would it not be  
 “ preferable to rouse his conscience, and mortify his presump-  
 “ tion, by shewing him the humbleness of his condition, in  
 “ regard to the Deity whom he disparages, than to stun him  
 “ with abuse, heap shame and ignominy on his character, and  
 “ perhaps prove his ruin? It is a widely different case when  
 “ such a man is offensively licentious or blasphemous in public,  
 “ when he sets a bad example to the community he belongs to,  
 “ by proceedings subversive of morality, decency, and social  
 “ order; then he steps out of this class, enters the first, and  
 “ his conduct becomes cognizable to the magistrate, who, if he  
 “ find him guilty, is to punish him for what he has been doing,  
 “ but not for what he has been thinking. After the most sedu-

"lous search in the Talmud, and in the whole range of philo-  
 "sophical and ethical learning, I have not been able to find a  
 "single passage to justify sovereigns and governments in per-  
 "secuting sectarians or dissenters from the established religion.  
 "If these dissenters are occasionally in the wrong, they are  
 "not wilfully so. The Creator implanted in them, as in all  
 "men, a longing after knowledge and perfection; they suppose  
 "themselves to be in the path of truth;—if they swerve from  
 "it in the integrity of their hearts, is that a sufficient reason  
 "for hatred and persecution? Beware then, brethren, of judg-  
 "ing uncharitably of your neighbours; desist from dealing out  
 "anathema and excommunication on him who falls inadvertently.  
 "Rather draw him unto you with mild words and gentle per-  
 "suasion. Forbid him not your meetings; let not the doors  
 "of assemblies and places of worship be shut to him when  
 "he comes to pour out his heart before his Maker. If ye do,  
 "if ye cast him off, and consider him as a stranger, ye cut off  
 "the return to repentance; the guilt is yours, he is doubly  
 "innocent. The house of God should be accessible to all; it  
 "is properly the abode of universal love, and peace should  
 "encompass it; let, then, every mortal enter it, and adore the  
 "Supreme Being as his individual feelings guide him. Moreover,  
 "king Solomon prayed, 'concerning a stranger that is not of  
 "thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy  
 "name's sake, &c. When he shall come and pray towards  
 "this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do  
 "according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for.' 1 Kings  
 "viii. 43. And ye, esteemed Christians, eminent for wisdom  
 "and learning, if it be your wish to promote peace and bro-  
 "therly love amongst mankind, do not countenance with the  
 "force of your intellect the sway of one man over the reli-  
 "gious opinions of another. God alone searches the heart, and  
 "knows our secret thoughts. We are but of yesterday, and  
 "know nothing. Shew me a single instance in our holy law,

“where it gives man a correctional jurisdiction over the thoughts and opinions of others. Our Rabbinical doctors ordain that sacrifices are to be accepted of the transgressors of Israel, to give them a chance of repentance. Do not deem it wise to rule the people with a rod of iron. Leave supremacy to God, and love each other like brethren,” &c. &c.

During the same year in which Mendlessohn published the above, an anonymous work appeared, entitled “Search after Light and Right,” in which Mendlessohn was attacked on account of his sentiments thus expressed on ecclesiastical power, which the author pronounces as diametrically opposite to the Mosaic law, which ordains stripes for disobedience, and curses on scepticism. This induced Mendlessohn to declare again his full opinion of religion and toleration, and in 1787 he published “Jerusalem,” or “Ecclesiastical Authority and Judaism,” where he says he once for all declares his sentiments on theological matters, by which he intends to abide as long as he should live.

In the first section he defines, on the principles of the social compact, the extent of the church’s authority as vested in elders over such members of it as dissent from its fundamental doctrines, and inquires whether they have a right in such cases to inflict anathema or excommunication. His answer to this question, deduced by a long series of argument, is, that according to reason, which is a divine voice in all, neither the state nor church are qualified to assume in theological matters any part but that of instructing, any power but that of persuading, any discipline but that of reason and principle, which may be otherwise expressed by saying, that the assenting or not assenting of any individual to certain immutable truths, neither gives him or takes from him any right or qualification to command other men’s minds at his own pleasure.

He proceeds in the second section to say, that these conclusions of his had excited alarm for the foundations of eccle-

siastical law, but that none of his opponents had attempted to controvert his arguments, or to demonstrate the least necessary connexion between doctrine and privilege. "They have all," he says, "started with the *petitio principii*, that there is such a thing as 'Jus sacro sancto,' while they model it each in his own way, and, as it were, take different means of determining the latitude and longitude of a meteor which they all assume to be visible. Thus they oppose to my arguments the sacred authority of the Mosaic religion which I profess, and exclaim, 'What are the laws of Moses but a system of religious government, and of the power and rights of religion? Now here is involved an erroneous opinion of Judaism. Judaism knows nothing of a revealed religion in the sense in which it is taken by Christians, as enjoining belief in dogmas and immutable truths, which admit of being demonstrated and warranted by human faculties. These the Lord has chosen to reveal to us (*the Jews*) by nature and events, but never in words or written characters. All the Israelites had was a divine legislation, i. e. laws, rules of life, and lessons how to conduct themselves in order to attain temporal and spiritual happiness, but no obligations of abstract religious belief where-by one man could be entitled to sit in judgment on the religious creed of another. This distinction has been little minded; supernatural legislation has been mistaken for supernatural revelation, and Judaism has been considered by Christians as a sort of earlier revelation of religious propositions and tenets necessary for the salvation of man. We call such truths immutable or eternal as are not subject to time, but continue the same to all eternity. They are either necessary, immutable in and of themselves, or casual; that is, their perpetuity is founded either on their nature, and they are true so, and not otherwise, because they are cogitable so, and not otherwise; or on their reality, when they are generally true, i. e. when they are so, and not otherwise, because they be-



“ come real so, and not otherwise, because of all the possible  
 “ truths of their kind they are the best so, and not otherwise.  
 “ In other words, necessary as well as casual truths flow from  
 “ a common source, from the fountain-head of all truth; the  
 “ former from reason, the latter from the will of God. The  
 “ propositions of necessary truths are true, because God con-  
 “ ceives them so, and not otherwise; and those of casual truths  
 “ are true, because God deemed them good, and considered  
 “ them to be in conformity with his wisdom so, and not other-  
 “ wise. The propositions of pure mathematics and logic are  
 “ examples of the former kind; the general propositions of  
 “ natural philosophy, pneumatology, and the laws of nature, by  
 “ which the universe, the material and spiritual worlds are go-  
 “ verned, are examples of the latter. The former are immutable  
 “ even to omnipotence, because God himself cannot make his  
 “ infinite wisdom mutable; the latter, on the contrary, are  
 “ subordinate to the will of God, and are immutable only so  
 “ far as it pleases his holy will; that is, so far as they answer  
 “ his purposes. His omnipotence might introduce other laws  
 “ instead of them, and may let exceptions take place, when-  
 “ ever they are of utility.

“ Besides those eternal truths, there are also temporal or  
 “ historical truths; things which did occur at one time, and,  
 “ perhaps, will never occur again; propositions which, through  
 “ a confluence of causes and effects, have become true in one  
 “ point and space of time, and which, therefore, can be con-  
 “ ceived as true in respect to that point of space and time only.  
 “ All historical truths, in their widest extent, are of this kind—  
 “ things of remote ages, which did once take place, and are  
 “ narrated to us, but which we ourselves can never observe.

“ These classes of truths and propositions differ no less in  
 “ their nature than in respect to their means of evidence; that  
 “ is, the mode and process by which men convince themselves  
 “ and others of them.

“The doctrines of the first class, or that of necessary truths, are founded on reason, that is, on an unalterable coherency and real connexion of ideas, in virtue of which they either presuppose or preclude one another. All mathematical and logical demonstrations are of that kind. They all shew the possibility or impossibility of associating certain ideas in the mind. He who would instruct his fellow-men in them, must not recommend them to his belief, but, as it were, force them upon his understanding; he must not cite authorities, and appeal to the trustworthiness of men, who maintained exactly the same thing, but he must analyse the ideas in all their distinguishing characteristics, and continue to hold them up to his pupil, one by one, until his internal sense perceives their junctures and connexion. We cannot, as Socrates justly observes, put anything into his mind, which it does not actually contain already; but we may facilitate the labour it would cost him to bring to light what is hidden, that is, to render the unperceived perceptible and obvious.

“The truths of the second class require, beside reason, observation as well. If we would know the laws which the Creator has prescribed to his creation, and by what general rules the mutations therein take place, we must experience, observe, and make experiments on single cases; that is, we must, in the first place, make use of the evidence of the senses; and next, educe by means of reason, out of sundry single cases, what they have in common. In doing so we shall indeed be obliged to trust in many things to the faith and credit of others. Our natural life does not last long enough for us to experience everything ourselves; and we are, in many cases, necessitated to rely on credible fellow-men, and to suppose the correctness of their experience, and of the experiments they pretend to have made. But we confide in them only as far as we know, and are certain that the objects themselves still exist, and that the experiments



“and observations may be repeated thereon, and put to the  
 “test, by ourselves, or by those who have the opportunity and  
 “the requisite skill. Nay, when the result becomes of impor-  
 “tance, and has a material influence on our own happiness, or on  
 “that of others, we are far from being satisfied with the report  
 “of even the most creditable witnesses, who state to us their  
 “observations and experiments, but seek an opportunity to  
 “repeat them ourselves, and to become convinced of them by  
 “their internal evidence. Historical truths, on the contrary, or  
 “those passages which as it were occur but once in the book  
 “of nature, must either explain themselves, or remain unintel-  
 “ligible; i.e. they can be observed by means of the senses  
 “only by those who are present at the time when, and at the  
 “place where, they happened; every one else can only take  
 “them on authority and testimonials; while those who live at a  
 “subsequent period must absolutely depend on the authenticity  
 “of the testimonials; for the thing testified of no longer  
 “exists. The object itself, and the direct inspection thereof, to  
 “which perhaps an appeal would be made, are no longer found  
 “in nature. The senses cannot convince themselves of the  
 “truth. In historical matters, the narrator’s reputation and  
 “his credibility constitute the only evidence. We cannot be  
 “persuaded of any historical fact unless by testimony. Were  
 “it not for authority, the truth of history would vanish along  
 “with the events themselves.

“Now whenever it suits with God’s design that mankind  
 “should be satisfied of any truth, his wisdom also affords them  
 “the aptest means to arrive at it. If it be a necessary truth,  
 “he grants them the degree of judgment which it requires. If  
 “a law of nature is to be promulgated to them, he inspires  
 “them with the spirit of observation; and if a fact is to be  
 “preserved to posterity, he confirms its historical certainty,  
 “and places the narrator’s credibility beyond all question. Con-  
 “sistently with the dignity of supreme wisdom, he instructs

“ mankind with respect to truths merely historical in a human  
 “ manner, i. e. by means of words and writings confirmed by  
 “ miracles and signs whenever such evidence of their authority  
 “ or credibility was required. But eternal and necessary truths,  
 “ on the other hand, so far as they are important to the welfare  
 “ and happiness of man, God teaches in a manner more suitable  
 “ to the Godhead; not by words or written characters, which  
 “ may be intelligible here and there, and to this or that man,  
 “ but by creation itself, and its internal relations, which are  
 “ legible and intelligible every where and to all men. Nor  
 “ does he certify them by signs and miracles, which affect only  
 “ historical belief; but he stirs the mind created by him, and  
 “ affords it an opportunity to observe those relations of things,  
 “ to observe its own self, and to become persuaded of the truths  
 “ of which it is destined to acquire a knowledge here on earth.  
 “ I therefore do not believe, that the resources of human rea-  
 “ soning are inadequate to the persuading of mankind of the  
 “ eternal truths requisite for their happiness; and that God  
 “ had need to reveal them to them in a preternatural manner.  
 “ They who maintain this, deny to the omnipotence or the good-  
 “ ness of God in one way that which, in another way, they  
 “ imagine they are attributing to his goodness. He was, in  
 “ their opinion, good enough to reveal to mankind the truths  
 “ on which their happiness depends; but he was neither om-  
 “ nipotent nor good enough to grant to them the faculties of  
 “ discovering them themselves.

“ Accordingly we find that Judaism boasts of no exclusive  
 “ revelation of immutable truths indispensable to salvation—of  
 “ no revealed religion in the sense in which that term is ge-  
 “ nerally taken. A revealed religion is one thing, a revealed  
 “ legislation is another. The voice which was heard on mount  
 “ Sinai did not say, ‘ I am the Lord your God, the eternal,  
 “ self-existing Being, omnipotent and omniscient, who rewards  
 “ men in a future life according to their works.’ All this is

“ the universal religion of mankind, without which they can be  
 “ neither virtuous nor saved, and was not to be revealed only  
 “ then and there. All this was supposed to be already known,  
 “ or, perhaps, was taught, and explained by human reasoning,  
 “ and placed beyond all doubt, during the days of preparation.  
 “ But the divine voice said, ‘ I am the Lord thy God, who brought  
 “ thee out of the land of Egypt; who delivered thee from  
 “ bondage. &c.;’ thus announcing an historical fact on which  
 “ the legislation of that particular people was to be founded,  
 “ since laws were to be revealed there, commandments and  
 “ judgments, but no immutable theological truths. ‘ I am the  
 “ Lord your God, who made a covenant with your forefathers,  
 “ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and swore to them to form out  
 “ of their seed a nation of my own. The time has at last  
 “ arrived when that promise is to be fulfilled. For that pur-  
 “ pose I delivered you from the bondage of the Egyptians. I  
 “ delivered you from it amidst unheard-of miracles and signs.  
 “ I am your deliverer, your chief, your king; I even make a  
 “ covenant with you, and give you laws, after which you shall  
 “ live, and become a happy nation in the land which I shall  
 “ put you in possession of:’ all these are historical truths,  
 “ from their nature resting on historical evidence, which must  
 “ be attested by authority, and may be corroborated by mira-  
 “ cles. According to Judaism, miracles and extraordinary signs  
 “ are no evidence either for or against immutable self-evident  
 “ truths. Hence the Scripture itself directs, that if a prophet  
 “ teach or counsel things which are contrary to decided truths,  
 “ we are not to hearken to him, even if he confirm his legation  
 “ by miracles: nay, if he seek to entice to idolatry, we are  
 “ to put the wonder-doer to death. For miracles can only  
 “ attest depositions, support authority, and confirm the credi-  
 “ bility of witnesses; but all depositions and authorities together  
 “ cannot subvert a decidedly self-evident truth, nor yet place  
 “ a questionable one above doubt and suspicion.

“ Now, although that divine book, which we have received  
 “ through Moses, is supposed to be properly a code of law, and  
 “ to contain judgments, rules of life, and precepts, yet it is well  
 “ known to include withal an inscrutable treasure of self-evident  
 “ truths and theological dogmas, which are so identified with  
 “ the laws as to form but one whole with them. All the laws  
 “ are referrible to, or are founded on, immutable self-evident  
 “ truths, or put one in mind of, and cause one to ponder on  
 “ them : hence our Rabbins justly observe, that the laws and  
 “ dogmas stand in the same relation to each other as the body  
 “ does to the soul. All those excellent theorems are, never-  
 “ theless, presented to knowledge and proposed for meditation,  
 “ without being forced upon belief. There is not, amongst all  
 “ the precepts and tenets of the Mosaic law, a single one which  
 “ says, ‘Thou shalt believe this,’ or, ‘Thou shalt not believe  
 “ it,’ but they all say, ‘Thou shalt do,’ or, ‘Thou shalt forbear.’  
 “ There faith is not commanded ; for faith takes no commands  
 “ but what get to it by the road of conviction. All the com-  
 “ mandments of the Mosaic law are addressed to the will of  
 “ man, and to his acting faculty. Nay, the word in the original  
 “ language, which is usually translated ‘to believe,’ in most  
 “ cases, properly means, ‘to trust in,’ ‘to rely on,’ ‘to have  
 “ full confidence in what is promised or caused to be expected.’  
 “ ‘Abraham trusted the Lord, and it was counted to him for  
 “ piety.’ Gen. xv. 6. ‘The Israelites saw, and had confidence  
 “ in the Lord, and in his servant Moses.’ Exod. xiv. 31. Where-  
 “ ever the question is of eternal self-evident truth, there is  
 “ nothing said of believing, but understanding and knowing.  
 “ ‘Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart,  
 “ that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and in the earth  
 “ beneath ; there is none else.’ Deut. iv. 39. ‘Hear, O Israel :  
 “ the Lord our God is one.’ Deut. iv. 4. In no place is it  
 “ said, ‘Believe, O Israel, and thou shalt be blessed ; forbear  
 “ doubting, O Israel, or this or that punishment shall betide

“thee.’ Commandments and prohibitions, rewards and punishments, are for actions only, for life and morals; all which depend on man’s will and pleasure, and are governed by notions of good and evil, and therefore, also, by hope and fear. Belief and doubt, assent and dissent, on the contrary, are not to be regulated by our volition—not by wishes and desires, not by fear and hope; but by our discernment of truth or untruth. For this reason, too, ancient Judaism has no symbolical books, no articles of faith. No one needed be sworn to symbols, to subscribe to articles of faith. Nay, we have not as much as a conception of what is called ‘oaths of creed;’ and, according to the spirit of true Judaism, must hold them inadmissible. That eminent teacher of the nation, Hillel the elder, who lived before the destruction of the second temple, reduced and comprehended the whole law in one practical precept. ‘Rabbi,’ said a Pagan to him, ‘wilt thou teach me the whole law while I am standing on one leg?’ Shammai, to whom he had made the same proposal before, dismissed him with contempt; but Hillel, celebrated for his imperturbable temper and his mildness, said, ‘Son, love thy neighbour as thyself. This is the text of the law; all the rest is commentary. Now go thy ways, and study’.”

Farther on in the work he says, “Judaism consists, or, according to the founder’s design, was to consist of,

“1st. Religious dogmas and propositions of immutable truths of God, of his government and providence, without which man can neither be enlightened nor happy. These were not forced on the belief of the people, by threats of eternal or temporal punishment, but, suitably to the nature and evidence of immutable truths, recommended for rational consideration. They needed not be suggested by direct revelation, or promulgated by words or writing, which are understood only in this or that place, at this or that time. The Supreme Being revealed them to all rational beings by



“ events and by ideas, and inscribed them in their soul, in a  
 “ character legible and intelligible at all times, and in all places.  
 “ Hence sings the Psalmist: ‘ The heavens tell the glory of God;  
 “ and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. One day telleth  
 “ this unto another, and night therein instructeth night. It is  
 “ not a lesson and discourse whose sound is not heard; its chord  
 “ rings through the entire globe; its words penetrate to the  
 “ extremes of the inhabited world, where he set a tabernacle  
 “ for the sun, &c.’ Ps. xix. 1. Their effect is as universal as  
 “ the salutary influence of the sun, which, while revolving round  
 “ its orbit, diffuses light and heat over the whole globe, as the  
 “ same bard still more distinctly declares, in another place:  
 “ ‘ From where the sun rises to where it sets the name of  
 “ the Lord is praised;’ or, as the prophet Malachi says in  
 “ the name of the Lord: ‘ From where the sun rises to where  
 “ it sets my name is great among the Gentiles; and in all  
 “ places, incense, sacrifice, and pure meat-offerings, are offered  
 “ unto my name; for my name is great among the heathen.’

“ 2ndly. Historical truths, or accounts of the occurrences of  
 “ the primitive world, especially memoirs of the lives of the  
 “ first ancestors of the nation, of their knowledge of the true  
 “ God, even of their failings, and the paternal correction im-  
 “ mediately following thereon, of the covenant which God  
 “ entered into with them, and his frequent promise to make  
 “ of their descendants a nation dedicated to himself. These  
 “ historical truths contain the ground-work of the national  
 “ union; and, as historical truths, they cannot, according to  
 “ their nature, be received otherwise than on trust: authority  
 “ alone gives them the necessary evidence. And they were,  
 “ moreover, confirmed to the nation by miracles, and supported  
 “ by an authority which sufficed to place faith beyond all doubt  
 “ and hesitation.

“ 3rdly. Laws, judgments, commandments, rules of life, which  
 “ were to be peculiar to that nation, and by observing which



“ it was to arrive at national—as well as every single member  
 “ thereof, at individual—happiness. The lawgiver was God  
 “ himself; God, not in his relations as Creator and Preserver  
 “ of the universe—but God, as Lord Protector and ally of their  
 “ forefathers; as the liberator, founder, and leader, as the king  
 “ and ruler of that people. And he gave the laws a sanction,  
 “ than which nothing could be more solemn; he gave them  
 “ publicly, and in a marvellous manner never before heard of,  
 “ whereby they were imposed on the nation and on their de-  
 “ scendants for ever, as an unalterable duty and obligation.

“ As directions to general practice, and rules of conduct,  
 “ the ceremonial law was the bond for uniting practice with  
 “ speculation, conduct with doctrine. They lead inquiring rea-  
 “ son to divine truths; partly to eternal, partly to historical  
 “ truths, on which the religion of that nation was founded.  
 “ Under that polity, state and religion were not united, but  
 “ one; not allied, but identical. The relations of man to so-  
 “ ciety, and the relations of man to God, converged into one  
 “ point, and could never come in collision. Hence civil life  
 “ amongst that nation assumed a holy and religious cast, and  
 “ every service to the public was, at the same time, true divine  
 “ service. The congregation was a congregation of the Lord;  
 “ their concerns were the Lord’s; the public taxes were heave-  
 “ offerings to the Lord; and, to the least measures and regu-  
 “ lations for the public safety, everything was religious. The  
 “ Levites, who lived on the public revenue, received their main-  
 “ tenance of the Lord. They were to have no part or inherit-  
 “ ance in the land; for the Lord is their inheritance. As to  
 “ offences, every offence against the authority of God, the  
 “ lawgiver of the nation, was an offence against majesty, and  
 “ therefore, a political or state offence. He who reviled God  
 “ committed high treason; he who wickedly broke the sabbath,  
 “ abrogated, as far as lay with him, a fundamental law of civil  
 “ society; for on the institution of that day rested a material

“part of the polity. ‘The sabbath shall be an eternal covenant between me and the children of Israel,’ says the Lord, “‘a perpetual sign, that in six days, &c.’ Exod. xxxi. Therefore under that polity those offences could, nay must, be “punished civilly, not as false opinions, not as misbelief, but “as misdeeds, as contumacious political offences, which aim at “the abolishing, or at least at weakening, the lawgiver’s authority, and thereby undermining the state itself. It was “not misbelief, not false doctrine or error, that was punished; “but contumacious offences against the majesty of the lawgiver, “daring misdeeds against the fundamental laws of the state “and the civil government; and it was punished only then, “when the crime, in licentiousness, exceeded all bounds, and “was approaching to rebellion; ‘when the offender did not mind “having the law quoted to him by two fellow-citizens, and “being threatened by them with the regular punishment, nay, “even took the punishment upon himself and committed the “offence in their sight. This was tantamount to high treason, “and the religious reprobate became a state criminal. Besides, the Talmudic doctors expressly declare, that ever since “the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, corporeal and “capital punishment, nay, all fines, so far as they were merely “national, ceased to be legal. Now this perfectly accords “with my principles, and cannot be explained except on them. “The civil bonds of the nation being dissolved, religious infractions no longer constituted state offences; and religion, “as such, knows of no punishment, of no penance, but what “a repentant sinner voluntarily imposes upon himself. It disclaims all coercion, smites with the wand of ‘gentleness’ only; “and acts only on the mind and on the heart. Let them try “to explain rationally the above Talmudic assertion any other “way than on my principles.”

I have submitted to the reader these long extracts from Mendlessohn’s most controverted writings in order that he may be enabled to form an intelligent judgment on a suspicion which

has been entertained, as I think, most unreasonably, that their author was a Sceptical Jew, that is, one who, while he professes the religion of Judaism, undervalues or calls in question the authority and inspiration of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures, as several of the school called Neologian have recently done. That he should be found to vindicate himself from such suspicion is so far important to the favourable reception of this Volume, as, if unremoved, it would lead cautious persons to distrust as an interpreter of the Bible the commentator whose suggestions have been most frequently adopted in the following Version of Ecclesiastes. I cannot doubt however that after the perusal of these extracts it will be allowed by the most cautious, that while he was a man of the most vigorous and independent thought, his exercise of it was ever under the wholesome restraint of the profoundest veneration for the venerable creed and institutions of his ancestors, though it be true that he differed from some of his brethren as to the origin and sanction of certain portions of that creed, considering that they are disclosed to all men alike by events and by ideas implanted in the human mind, and that they neither needed to be nor are promulgated in the Pentateuch, and by peculiar revelation to the Jews.

I shall conclude the above notice of his life with stating, that his unwearied application to literature never forsook him. One of the most important of his works, besides those which I have mentioned, was the "Phædon," or "On the Immortality of the Soul." The catalogue of them is of considerable length. Though remarkable for the most rigid abstemiousness, he was very fond of company, and excelled in a playful and harmless satire. He died in the year 1786. It has been pronounced of him by those best acquainted with his writings, that "while he would have been an ornament to any nation, he was unrivalled in his own."

The following is a translation from the Rabbinic Hebrew of the Preface to his Commentary on Ecclesiastes, a production of a somewhat difficult and recondite description, but sufficiently curious and valuable to merit the attention of the reader.

## THE PREFACE OF R. MOSES MENDLESSOHN.

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THE commentaries on our Holy Law, as is well known, follow four different methods, viz. those of simple, recondite, allegorical, and mysterious interpretation<sup>1</sup>. Now these four sorts of commentary are all to be regarded like the words of the living God, as all right and compatible one with another; nor is the fact of their being so contrary to good sense or analogy, or strange or surprizing to the human understanding, as I shall explain by the help of the Lord.

Now every discourse has a meaning agreeable to all the purposes of the speaker and hearer, and corresponding exactly with the succession and connexion of the things said, without exceeding or falling short of them; and this is called its primary meaning, and the exposition of this meaning is called פְּשֹׁט. And with respect to this primary meaning our Rabbins said, “No passage of Scripture goes beyond its primary meaning<sup>2</sup>.” The method of the פְּשֹׁט, or exposition of the primary meaning, is to notice the meaning and not the words used in expressing it. Now as to sense, there is no difference between זָכַר and שָׁמַר; or again, between לֹא תִתְאַוֶּה and לֹא תִתְחַמֹּד<sup>3</sup>; for what is intended by them according to their primary meaning is in

<sup>1</sup> They are called in Hebrew סֹד and פְּשֹׁט דְּרַשׁ רַמְבַּם.

<sup>2</sup> אֵין מִקְרָא יוֹצֵא מִדִּי פִשְׁטוֹ i. e. it exactly corresponds to it, and the text is always of the right length, and no more, to express it.

<sup>3</sup> These words occur in the corresponding accounts of the delivery of the law, to express corresponding ideas, in the part of Exodus called by the Jews the “section Jethro,” (i. e. several chapters, of which the 20th is one), and in Deuteronomy.

itself only one sense, as Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra has explained at section Jethro. Now any one in conversation<sup>1</sup> is at liberty to employ synonymous terms or phrases, similar in sense, as he may think proper; and though in fact each of the synonymous nouns has its own peculiar shade of meaning which distinguishes it from its cognate word, so much so that two nouns will not be found expressing exactly the same thing, without any difference in force or want of force, or distinction in respect of modification of expression, and much less any two phrases be found entirely similar in signification; still sometimes this distinction is exceedingly small, so that with respect to the sense there is no use or importance in it, or it would be troublesome to the speaker or hearer to look to every single word in order to determine whether such an one would be more agreeable to the sense according to that subtle consideration; and then the speaker will employ either of the two synonymous words or phrases without discrimination, and with freedom and ease of speech; and thus sometimes they are employed for the elegancies of poetry, either for repeating the same meaning in different words after the manner of writers of songs, or in case the nature of the style should require the same subject to be mentioned two or three times, when it is for the beauty of the poetry to express it in different words, as is known to every beginner in the art of poetry and song. In short, the natural speaker for the most part considers the sense of what he says, and not the words he uses: and so it is with a prophet or one who speaks by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His first intention regards the sense with peculiar care, and arranges the words according to the beauty of language, and the elegancies of poetry and song, without appropriating a particular meaning or thing signified to each of all the varieties of expression.

But when the natural and human speaker discriminates and weighs the signification of each separate word in the scales of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "master of a tongue."



correctness, and without any licence, then he employs each of the words or phrases of similar meaning, and not its cognate word which resembles it in grammatical form and sense, not by chance or accident, or even by way of ornament or elegance, but to indicate and point out by means of it a particular meaning which he does not choose, or which it would not be right to explain with the full interpretation<sup>2</sup>, either for the sake of brevity, or for some other reason; and the thing signified by that refinement will be a sort of secondary meaning. And this the speaker intends to be taken not by itself, or as the primary meaning, but merely as a piece of subtilty and ingenuity<sup>3</sup>. As an instance of this, Judah said to Joseph, "Thou art as Pharaoh." Yarchi<sup>4</sup> interprets it thus, "Thou art accounted as a king in my eyes." This is its פשט or simple interpretation, and its מדרש or recondite interpretation is, "Thy end may be that thou mayest be smitten for him<sup>5</sup> with leprosy, as Pharaoh was on account of Sarah thy grandmother, &c." The first method is called the simple method of interpreting it, or its פשט; and it was clearly the primary meaning of the speaker, as appears from the connexion of the preceding and following events; since it was in fact the intention of Judah to plead with the lord of the land, but in fear and submission,

<sup>2</sup> הַטִּיב is here used adverbially.

<sup>3</sup> Observe that Mendlessolin does not praise this or other absurdities which he quotes; he merely mentions them as specimens of the various kinds of commentary, the רמז פשט, &c.

<sup>4</sup> This is the name by which that distinguished commentator is usually known, and we have, therefore, adopted it in this place and elsewhere; but Wolfe has shown in his Bib. Rabb. that רשי" is properly a contraction for רַב שְׁלֹמֹה בֶּן יִצְחָק Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, and that the name Yarchi has crept in no one knows how, in the course of ages. Buxtorf says, רשי" is put for רַב שְׁלֹמֹה יְרָחִי which is wrong. For a short notice of his life, vid. p. 38, supra.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin.



as would be consistent with prudence and wisdom for a stranger in a strange land, not to speak harshly with him or provoke him, and consequently, it is evident that he meant to praise him in saying of him, "Thou art as Pharaoh;" but since he has expressed his words indefinitely, and has not said plainly, "Thou art a great prince, or regarded in my eyes as a king," it would seem that the secondary meaning was to warn him, that even if he was of equal account with Pharaoh, he was not better than he, and that it was quite possible he might be plagued as Pharaoh was; and such is the way of the intelligent man, to moderate his expressions<sup>1</sup> before kings and great men of the earth, when he wishes to reprove them to their face, or to say before them a thing which will be displeasing in their eyes. He cloaks his words under the cover of praise and flattery, and the wise ruler will apprehend their secondary meaning, and lay it to heart. Now there is no doubt that Judah said this to Joseph after the manner of a natural and human speaker, but that he nevertheless hinted at the secondary meaning, which is very much in agreement with the business in which he was engaged; but with respect to the connexion and succession of the events, we see that this was not the primary meaning.

Now as for him who speaks by prophecy or by the Holy Spirit, there is no doubt that nothing ever occurs in his discourse without its peculiar meaning, and if he chooses one of similar words or phrases, that he has some wish or purpose in so doing with regard to the sense, and consequently not only observes their meanings, but also the similarity and interchange which exists between them; and that all the changes of phrase, whether great or small, refer to a secondary meaning, even though that sometimes be remote from the primary meaning; and the interpretation of this secondary meaning is called **דרש** or recondite interpretation. An instance of this we have with regard to the words **זכר** and **שמר** and again **תתאוה**

<sup>1</sup> For the phrase **לכלכל דבריו** vid. Ps. cxii. 5.

and תחמוד, though according to the first meaning the thing signified by them be the same, still there can be no doubt that in the discourses of the great God, this change cannot occur by accident or chance, as we explained that it may in human speech, because Supreme Wisdom does nothing without a useful object and purpose; and again, we cannot attribute this change to beauty of poetry, since the intention of altering the expressions in Deuteronomy from what they were in Exodus, (section Jethro), was not to give sweetness of expression to the poetry by a change of words, and consequently it is evident that all this was for a peculiar purpose and meaning, viz. to raise the well-instructed and intelligent person to the meaning which they explain<sup>2</sup> minutely by one of the methods of recondite interpretation received among our nation; and consequently our wise men of blessed memory have done well in that they have commented reconditely according to these methods on the alteration and interchange between the first expressions and the latter, and all their words are true. Though the rule which Aben Ezra mentions be also true, that the Hebrew observes the sense and not the words; for the Rabbi spoke there only with reference to the primary meaning as we have described it, and you will find that our wise men themselves too sometimes mentioned the recondite interpretation, and afterwards asked פשטי דקרא במאי כתיב “The simple interpretation of the text, how does that run?” as is seen in many places of the Talmud<sup>3</sup>. And consequently we see clearly that our wise men did not reject the simple interpretation and primary meaning which neglects the words and only observes the sense, although they took care also to notice the secondary meaning,

<sup>2</sup> i. e. is explained.

<sup>3</sup> He calls the Talmud הש"ס i. e. סדרים, יִשְׁשָׁה סְדָרִים sex ordines vel partes operis Talmudici, i. e. the קְדָשִׁים, נְזִיקִין, נָשִׁים, מוֹעֵד, זְרָעִים and טְהוֹרוֹת.

which refinedly treats on every word and letter, or even horn of a letter<sup>1</sup>. For among the words of the living God nothing occurs accidentally, or without a meaning, just as he has created nothing in his world without a particular purpose, as is seen clearly by every intelligent person.

Now the distinguishing mark of the secondary meaning is, that the thing signified in it is not in accordance in every respect with all the intentions of the speaker and hearer, or with the whole connexion of the passage and its union with what precedes and follows. And sometimes the writer of recondite interpretation pays no regard or attention except to the phrase he is actually engaged with, and seeks a secondary meaning for it according to the customary methods by which the law is reconditely interpreted, although this meaning be not in accordance with the passages preceding and following, as it should be. And so you will find for the most part in the recondite commentaries of our sages, that they did not interpret by means of them the connexion of the verses, and their arrangement one after another, but wrote recondite commentaries on every single phrase by itself, and sought a secondary meaning in them; and the fact that there is no connexion or agreement between them, is not at all at variance with the method of the secondary meaning, as is known to every scholar.

<sup>1</sup> The horns of letters are the little corners which give them a finished appearance, as in the top of the letter ב. Buxtorf mentions the following curious passage on this subject. We give his words as they stand. In the Talmud. Menach. fol. 29, ii. בשעה שעלה משה למרום מצאו להקב"ה שיושב וקושר כתרים לאותיות &c. i. e. Quo tempore ascendit Moses in altum invenit Deum sedentem et ligantem coronas ad literas (i. e. apices quibusdam literis inscribentem) et dixit ei, "Domine mundi, quis retardat manum tuam?" respondet Deus, "Homo quidam qui venturus est post multa secula, nomine Akiva ben Joseph, qui commentaturus est super unumquemque apicem literæ infinitos cumulos interpretationum." These are the *κεφαλαί* "titles" mentioned in Matt. v. 18.

And accordingly you will see that Yarchi, the light of the captivity, who has proceeded in his commentary on the Bible<sup>2</sup> on the method of recondite interpretation, sometimes has explained each passage of scripture according to a sense separate and distinct from that of the passage which is next to it in place, without any connexion or union between them, as there ought to be according to the first meaning.

Now if the sense, as developed by the method of recondite interpretation, be derived from observation, not of the words and phrases in the way that we have described, but of beginnings and endings of words, their combination, their numerical value, and the points over the letters; and in short, if the meaning is reconditely interpreted from observation of the letters and points, that method of commentary is called רמז; as in the word בְּהִבְרָאָם Gen. ii. 4<sup>3</sup>, (where the letter ה is written small), and they interpret this word, “he created them by the letter ה of his holy name יְהוָה<sup>4</sup>.” Again, at the passage in Gen. xxxii. 4, “I have sojourned with Laban,” Yarchi remarks, “דבר גרתי” בגימטריא תריג” כלומר עם לבן גרתי ותריג” מצות שמרתי ולא “גרתי גרתי i.e. the word גרתי is used after the method of גימטריא or transposition of the same set of letters, and becomes therefrom תריג, and the meaning of the passage is, “I have sojourned with Laban, and kept

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “law, prophets, and Hagiographa.”

<sup>3</sup> “In their being created.”

<sup>4</sup> Or, “according to the letter ה,” which is made up of separate lines, to indicate that the heavens and earth are only composed of parts which will be dissolved and diminished, as is further denoted by the small size of the letter. They also remark, with respect to the צִירוף, or combination of letters in this word, that the same letters also spell בְּאֵבְרָהֶם, to denote that the world was created for the faithful, who alone see the glories of God in creation. The word צִירוף is thus explained by Buxtorf: “Apud Cabalistas combinatio litterarum est quarum æqualibus numeris vel mutua permutatione aliquid occulte et mystice significatur.”

the 613 commandments, and have not learnt any of his evil practices<sup>1</sup>."

And sometimes, when the sense of the רמז or allegorical commentary is a mysterious and wonderful one, it is proper to conceal and hide it from the multitude, and not to reveal it,

<sup>1</sup> The Jews held, that this was the number of commandments obligatory upon them, vid. a note to Mr Bernard's Maimonides. Mr Bernard says, "The Rabbins count in the Mosaic law 613 commandments, 248 of which they call מצות עשה positive commandments, and 365 תרי"ג מצות לא תעשה negative commandments. Thus they say, מצות נאמרו לו למשה בסיני, ש"ס לאוין, כמנן ימות החמה 613 commandments have been enjoined to Moses in Sinai; 365 negative (commandments) according to the number of the days of the year, and 248 positive (commandments) corresponding to the (number of) the limbs of a man." Mendlessohn says, in his Jerusalem: "Ancient Judaism has no articles of faith. No one needed to be sworn to symbols, to subscribe articles of faith. Nay, we have not so much as a conception of what are called 'oaths of creed;' and according to the spirit of true Judaism we must hold them inadmissible. It was Maimonides who first conceived the thought of limiting the religion of his forefathers to a certain number of principles, 'in order,' says he, 'that religion, like all sciences, may have its fundamental ideas, from which all the rest may be deduced.' But he (Mendlessohn) here refers to the 13 articles of the Jewish Catechism, which answer to our 39 articles, and not to the 613 commandments mentioned above, which the Rabbins had counted up in the Mosaic law, long before these articles of faith were drawn up. Those 613 were commandments relating to practice, and not to belief."

Buxtorf, at the word גמטריא Geometria, has the following remarks: Geometria est Cabalæ species quæ ex diversarum vocum æquali numero eundem sensum colligunt; verbum ortum videtur ex Græco γεωμετρία vel potius συμμετρία. Sic ex illis verbis, "Ecce ego adducturus sum servum meum צמח (Germen) Zach. iii. 8, colligunt per צמח intelligendum esse Messiam, qui debebat appellari מְנַחֵם conulator, juxta illud 'Longe recessit a me מְנַחֵם' in Threnis, i. e. consolator aut Messias, ut idem Talmude explicatur (vid. Sanhedrim, fol. 98). Jam literæ vocis צמח in numero valent 138, totidem etiam



except to the choicest among men, and then it is called סוד. And since we see from the many instances of Supreme Wisdom's intending one work for many purposes, that this may be set down as an attribute of Supreme Wisdom in general<sup>2</sup>, and we see in the works of creation in general, and in the limbs of living creatures in detail, that their Creator has intended each limb for several different purposes; for instance, he has made the nose for smelling, for breathing, for discharging the superfluous humour of the eyes, and to ornament the form of the face; and he has made the air for the living creatures to breathe, to convey the voice, for the blowing of the wind, for

vois מְנַחֵם. Cum itaque Propheta dixit, 'Adducam servum meum צֶמַח' perinde est ac dixisset servum meum מְנַחֵם Messiam;" (so Aben Ezra and Kimchi on Zeechariah iii. 8.) (Observe that the Hebrew method of notation is merely the addition as they stand of the numbers denoted by the separate letters, beginning at either end, because they have no scale of notation; thus, "תְּרִיג" =  $3 + 10 + 200 + 400 = 613$ , and צֶמַח =  $8 + 40 + 90 = 138$ , and מְנַחֵם =  $40 + 8 + 50 + 40 = 138$ , the letters having no local value). Again, in Gen. xxv. 21, וַתֵּהָרֶה רִבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ and "Rebekah his wife conceived," or "Rebekah conceived אִשְׁתּוֹ" Now אִשְׁתּוֹ =  $6 + 400 + 300 + 1 = 707$ , and אֵשׁ וְקֶשֶׁת =  $300 + 100 + 6 + 300 + 1 = 707$ . So that אִשְׁתּוֹ is equivalent to אֵשׁ וְקֶשֶׁת fire and stubble, i. e. Jacob and Esau, as we find in Obad. 18, "בֵּית יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ וּבֵית עֵשָׂו לֶקֶשׁ." "The house of Jacob shall be fire, and the house of Esau stubble." Again, in Gen. xi. 1, "And all the earth was of one speech," שְׂפָה אֶחָת. Now שְׂפָה אֶחָת =  $400 + 8 + 1 + 5 + 80 + 300 = 794$ , and לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ =  $300 + 4 + 100 + 5 + 50 + 6 + 300 + 30 = 795$ . The Rabbins make these two numbers the same (how I cannot presume to say), and draw from thence an equivalence between the "one speech," of which all the world was before Babel, and the לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, or Hebrew language. Again, Buxtorf says, "בֵּית שִׁלֹה מְשִׁיחַ" veniet Shilo valet 358, quod et מְשִׁיחַ; hence the identity between Shilo and the Messiah is established.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "that this defines supreme wisdom."

the descent of rain and dew, for the ascent of flame, &c.; (observe how he has intended a single thing for many uses, and so various!) such being the case, I say, it is not to be wondered at that the intention of this Supreme Wisdom in one expression should be for many different meanings to be expressed, and all of them true; and so say our sages, "One passage of scripture is to be reconditely interpreted in many senses," and so they have said in the Zohar, at the text, "Who knoweth the spirit of man? &c." which it is difficult to understand according to the פשט or simple interpretation. They said, **האי קרא כמה גוונים אית ביה: והכי הוא כל מלי** **דאורייתא כמה גוונים בכל חד וחד**, וכלהו יאות i. e. "as for this passage, there are many meanings<sup>1</sup> in it, and thus it is with all the words of the law, there are many meanings in every single one of them, and all of them are right and good;" and accordingly they have interpreted this verse in many places in different ways.

And you will understand hereby, how it is proper to explain every expression uttered in prophecy or by inspiration of the Holy Spirit by several methods, viz. the דרש, the רמז, and the סוד, and that all of them agree with the פשט, since that is the most necessary of them all; but there is no difference between the truthfulness of the פשט and that of the דרש, since there is no doubt that everything that proceeds from the lips of him who speaks by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and every single movement of his lips intends a peculiar sense and meaning, and that there is not one unprofitable word among them, just as there will not be found among the works of the Creator a single thing devoid of all purpose or use; and for every one of the fibres of a fly's wing, or an ant's foot, there is a particular use, even though human skill would be wearied out with discovering them in detail, as is known to investigators in natural history; and consequently, there is no doubt that in every

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "colours."

place which our sages have reconditely interpreted according to their usual method, they have not shunned the plain interpretation, or neglected the primary meaning which is agreeable with the connexion of the passages, but that they have seen in their wisdom, that the method of simple interpretation is not sufficient for the purpose of the details of the passage, and the discrimination of them, as we have mentioned.

As for instance; the wise man has said, "A live dog is better off than a dead lion." You will see in my commentary on this passage by the method of פשט, that he here speaks after the opinion of those who deny the immortality of the soul; for according to them the same accidents happen to men and beasts, and the death of the one is as the death of the other; and since the most despised of animals, the dog, is esteemed above the carcase of a lion, the most noble among the beasts of the earth, in the opinion of those infidels the same is the case also with the sons of men, that the most afflicted and impoverished, despised and debased of men, he, I say, is more happy when alive than the most perfect of human kind after death, since that in their opinion is the destruction and annihilation of the soul, and that would be the very height of ignominy and disaster, (see my comment at the place); and consequently this passage is not at variance with what he says, that "The day of one's death is better than that of one's birth;" for there he speaks after the opinion of those who possess the true knowledge, who believe in the immortality of the soul, according to whose opinion death is to the righteous a going to real life, and truly desirable felicity, as I shall explain in its place. And as to the objection against the above passage which Rabbi Tenaehom, the writer of recondite commentary, (Talmud, Schabbath, fol. xxx. page 1) has drawn from what Solomon himself says, "So that I was ready to praise the dead who are dead already, &c., and as better off than either, him who has not yet been," that apparently he only said this

agreeably to the opinion of the unbelievers whom I have mentioned<sup>1</sup>, and how, he would say, should he, according to their perishable doctrine, praise the dead or him who is not yet born? since according to their doctrine a live dog is better off than a dead lion. Now according to the simple interpretation of these passages they agree together. For such is the character of this perishable doctrine; it perverts the paths of skill and investigation, and brings its professor into great perplexity, till he knows not which to choose, whether life or death; for if he who denies the immortality of the soul, looks at the evil work done under the sun, it is quite likely that he should be disgusted with life, and say that death is better than life, or curse his birth-day as Job did; many evils and distresses alarm him, and he has no comforter; to-morrow he will have to go to his long home, and return to nothingness, as his expectation was nothingness; or if (on the other hand) he lay to heart that there is no greater evil than utter annihilation and destruction, the conviction of good sense will as it were compel him to choose a life of distress and sorrow before the death and destruction of the soul; and so sometimes he will say to himself, "Do all that is in the power of thy hand to do, since there is no judgment and no account;" and sometimes he will be disgusted from doing anything great or small, and will say, "The race is not to the swift, &c." (as is explained in the commentary); and thus his thoughts will trouble him, and sling his soul as in the hollow of a sling from confusion to faintness of heart; and there will be for ever a strife in his mind between the judgment of the understanding and the tumults of nature; and on this account "there is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked;" for "like a troubled sea their heart cannot rest;" and from this perplexity a man cannot be delivered except by a belief in the immortality of the soul and recompense in the life to come, as I shall explain in its place, and as I have

<sup>1</sup> i. e. as quoting their opinion.



written at length in my book on the Immortality of the Soul<sup>2</sup>. But all this belongs to the plain interpretation of the passage and its primary meaning. But it was not without an especial purpose that he who spake by the Holy Ghost chose the illustration of the dog and the lion; and though it be truly conducive to poetic beauty, it is nevertheless probable that he also intended by it a secondary meaning, after the manner of דָּרַשׁ, viz. to point out that with respect to cases of the law, they make it lawful to carry about on the sabbath to supply the necessity of a live dog, but not for a dead man, though he be a hero; and that as Solomon mentions the superiority of a living body over a dead one, he meant to hint at what occurred to himself with respect to his illustrious father's body when the spirit had left it; and this is what Rabbi Tenachom refinedly comments on this passage<sup>3</sup>.

Now as for myself, a humble individual, I have undertaken to explain this roll in the way most agreeable to the literal signification of the text, and the connexion and sequence of the subjects contained in it. For I have observed that nearly all the commentators who had preceded me have almost entirely failed in doing justice to their task of interpretation<sup>4</sup>; and, (at the same time that I say it, I crave forgiveness from those great and glorious men<sup>5</sup>), I have not found in one of them an interpretation adequate to the correct explanation of the connexion of the verses of the book; but according to their method, nearly every verse is spoken separately and unconnectedly; and this would not be right in a private and insignificant author, and

<sup>2</sup> Mendlessohn's Phædon.

<sup>3</sup> There is probably a Talmudic story that David died on a sabbath-day, and his son would not permit funeral honors to be paid him on that day.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase יָצָא יְדֵי חֻבְתּוֹ signifies "egreditur manus officii sui," i. e. liber est ab officio suo, satisfecit officio suo.

<sup>5</sup> i. e. with all due respect be it said.



much less in a wise king to whom testimony is borne, that he spake by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And as if it were not enough for him to be destitute of connexion and arrangement, even great contradictions are found in the words of this able man, according to the commentaries of most of the writers upon him; sometimes they make him assert a proposition, and sometimes deny it, and sometimes pronounce right, and sometimes wrong, what is in itself exactly the same thing; so that Rabbi Aben Ezra noticed these contradictions at the verse, "vexation is better than laughter," and says, that since the Scripture has borne testimony to Solomon, that after him there never will arise a wise man like him, we may be sure that there is no contradiction or inconsistency in his words, but that they are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge; and he has replied, though but briefly, to these instances of inconsistency; but my mind has not been set at rest by all that he has written there.

Now it is true that in the chapter <sup>1</sup>במה מדליקין we read, אמר ר' יהודה ברי' דרב שמואל בר שילת משמי' דרב בקשו חכמים לגנוז ספר קהלת מפני שדבריו סותרין זה את זה, "Judah son of Rabbi Samuel son of Shilath said in the name of Rav, 'The wise men sought to secrete the book of Ecclesiastes because its words were contradictory to each other.'" But our sages doubtless meant that they seem so to him who has only informed himself about them at first sight, and sought to hide it only on account of the danger that may arise from it to men of levity of mind; for these holy men have shewn us themselves the way to solve the difficulties and contradictions which occur in the words of the wise man, and accordingly it is added, ומפני מה לא גנוזו מפני שתחלתו דברי תורה וסופו דברי תורה. i. e. "the reason why they did not secrete it was, because its beginning and end were consistent with the law;" and "therefore," as Yarchi remarks in commenting on this

<sup>1</sup> Mischna, Schabbas, ch. x.

passage of the Talmud, "much more whatever is between the beginning and end." And afterwards they discussed the explanation of the contradictions they found there; so that when they came to secrete also the book of Proverbs on account of the contradictions they found there, they came round and said, ספר קהלת עיינין ואשכחינן טעמה הכי נמי לעיינן i. e. "we have looked closely into the book Coheleth, and discovered a meaning in it. Here, too<sup>2</sup>, let us look closely." You see then that our sages, forbid it heaven, did not absolutely determine that Solomon's words were at variance with each other; for this would be in the highest degree reprehensible in any intelligent man, and much more in one who spake by the Holy Ghost.

Consequently it becomes our duty to loose the bundles of doubts and undo the bands of the contradictions, which Aben Ezra has mentioned, in a manner agreeable to the simple interpretation of the text, according to the method I have pursued in my commentary, as is proper for one who undertakes to explain the primary meaning. And before I proceed to the interpretation, I shall premise to thee the known and approved rule in investigating the difficulties in the words of the book, viz. to recollect that all the things said in it do not represent the real opinion of king Solomon, but that sometimes he speaks after the manner of those who support two opposite sides in a discussion, an enquirer, and an answerer, as it is with those who are examining into difficult subjects; for those pursuing after truth by means of the exercise of the understanding, do not reach the object of their pursuit, unless they hear the contradictory arguments, and compare all the forms of the alleged doubts, and weigh in the balance and scales of justice the matter in debate and its converse, and bring the conflicting opinions into comparison, each beside each, until they distinguish truth from falsehood, and certain from doubtful. And since we have seen that the author of this roll wrote in

<sup>2</sup> i. e. in the Proverbs.

the way of investigation and open discussion, it is consistent with this, that no part of it should be attributed to himself<sup>1</sup>, except the law which he has laid down in the beginning of his discourse, before the doubts and contradictory arguments started up, and the conclusion he arrives at<sup>2</sup> after the discussion and the completion of the investigation. And this is the meaning of what our wise men said about the beginning and end of it being agreeable with the words of the law. And if we find any of the intervening passages apparently strange and repugnant to the law of truth, it is proper to attribute these to the part of the objector, and they will then be represented as the opinion of the infidel or the sceptic, so that the wise man may be saved from blame. And in this way is interpreted in the book Zohar<sup>3</sup> what is written in the 3rd chapter of this book,

<sup>1</sup> As his own opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, "the ascent to agreement or accordance."

<sup>3</sup> The **זוהר** Zohar is a most ancient Jewish commentary on the Pentateuch, which likewise contains much collateral matter, principally of a cabalistic and very recondite description. It is attributed to Rabbi Simeon, son of Jochanan, or, as he is called by contraction, "**רשב"י**". He was the disciple of Rabbi Akiva, a Talmudic Rabbi, who was slain fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in Adrian's war against the Jews, about the year 120 A.D. The Jews say, that he lay hid in a cave twelve years, for fear of the emperor, and in the mean time wrote this book, which by the time he had finished it, was of such bulk, that R. Gedaliah, in the Schalscheleth, says, **זה ההיבור הוא כל כך גדול הכמות שאם היה נמצא כלו יחד היה משאת גמל**. "This composition was so very great, that if it was all of it collected together, it would be a camel's burden." In many places it is repugnant to the doctrines of the Talmud; but where it treats of those things which are not discussed there, it is looked on by the Rabbins as of paramount authority. The author nowhere mentions the Gemara, or any Talmudic book, and this has led the Jews to suppose the compilation of the Talmud to be of a later date. Mendlessohn expresses his surprize at meeting with anything like a simple interpretation in it. Its language and style are very abstruse and difficult, and it is more replete with Syriasms than the Talmud.

viz. on the hypothesis that they are hard words and apparently (forgive us, heaven, for saying so) contradictory to the truth of providence and the immortality of the soul, which are the foundations of the law of truth; they say, that לא אמר שלמה האי קרא מגרמי' כשאר אינון מלין, אלא אהדר אינון מלוי דטפשא דעלמא, דאמרו כך, ומאי אמרי כי מקרה האדם מקרה הבהמה וגו' טפשא דלא ידעין ולא מסתכלין בחכמתא אמרי דהאי עלמא איזיל במקרה, וקצ"ה לא אשגח עליהו, אלא מקרה האדם ומקרה הבהמה, ומקרה אחר וגו' וכד שלמה אסתכל באינון טפשא דקאמרי דא, קרי להון בהמה, דאינון עבדי גרמיהו בהמה ממש, בגין דאמרין מלין אלין, "Solomon did not speak this passage in his own person, like the rest of his words; but he is here repeating the words of ignorant men of the world, who said so; and what did they say? 'That the same accidents happen to men and beasts, &c.;' ignorant that they are, and not knowing common sense, in that they say that this world goes by chance, and that the Holy One takes no care about it, but that 'the accidents of men and beasts are the same, and one chance happens to both of them,' and since Solomon knew them to be ignorant in that they said so, he calls them beasts, for that they made themselves mere beasts in that they said these words." You will see by referring to the place that the writer has commented on the connexion of these passages in a method approaching to the simple method of interpretation.

But still I in my humility have applied myself to interpret them after another manner; for after I had meditated on all this section from the beginning of it to its end, the simple sense of the passage seemed to be, that the most strong and certain proof of the immortality of the soul, and recompence in the life to come, was to be derived from the existence of wrong and violence in the world, viz. that as for the place of justice, wickedness was there, &c. For he who believes in the attri-

butes of God and his providence, cannot escape from one of these alternatives, either to believe that souls exist after death, and that there is hereafter a time of account for every action, whether good or bad, or<sup>1</sup>, to impute evil and wrong to the breast of the blessed God. This is a proof which it is impossible to evade. But the nature of the soul and its formation is not by itself quite so strong a proof; for the caviller may perhaps choose to deny the superiority of man over the beast, and argue that both have the same breath. (See my commentary at the place, on chap. iii.) And in my opinion this interpretation of mine is more in accordance with the connexion of the passage, and agreeable to what is found in subsequent sections of this book; for the things there said appear at first sight more difficult and more remote from the radical principles of the law of truth even than what is said in the third chapter. And by the help of the blessed God I have laboured and found a right way, and, as I think, a true one, to dispose of every difficulty in those sections, and to explain the words of the wise king in a method by which they will be found to be not opposing, but strengthening the foundation of the law of truth.

<sup>2</sup>Now our Rabbins of blessed memory discussed carefully by the methods mentioned above whichever of his expressions are contradictory to one another. They say, “It is written, ‘Vexation is better than laughter,’ and again it is written, ‘I said of laughter, מְהוֹלֵל הוּא.’ It is written, ‘I praised mirth,’ and again it is written, ‘I said of mirth, What doeth it?’ There is no contradiction or inconsistency in saying, ‘Vexation is better than laughter,’ i. e. ‘better is the vexation wherewith God is vexed against the righteous than the laughter wherewith the Deity laughs at the wicked in this world,’ and in saying likewise, ‘I said of laughter, מְהוֹלֵל הוּא,’<sup>3</sup> i. e. the laughter wherewith

<sup>1</sup> He inserts, “Forgive us, heaven, for saying it.”

<sup>2</sup> For the original of this passage, see page 95.

<sup>3</sup> It is excellent.



the Deity laughs with the righteous in the world to come; and again in saying, 'I was praising mirth,' i. e. the mirth of the commandment, and in saying likewise, 'Of mirth I said, What doeth it?' i. e. the mirth, not of the commandment, &c." It is clear from these their words that they interpreted מהולל as a word expressing praise, whereas, as Yarchi has explained it, and according to the simple interpretation of the passage, its sense will be as though it were derived from the word הוללות in the phrase הוללות וסכלות; and so it appears from what is clearly implied by the connexion of the sentences, "I said in my heart, Come now, I will try thee with mirth, and enjoy pleasure, and, behold, this also was in vain." "I said of laughter, מהולל הוא, and of mirth, What doeth it?" and consequently it is evident that he is reprobating laughter, and saying of it that it is a thing in which there is no substantial good; but that our sages of blessed memory commented thus in consequence of the wise man's having employed the word מהולל in this place, since its signification is sometimes that of praise and high excellence, as מהלל שם יהוה (Ps. cxlv. 3, and ex. 3), and sometimes of folly and want of understanding, so that it would seem that the secondary sense is, that sometimes laughter is excellent, and to be praised. But it is impossible to speak of laughter as "of the commandment," for they had already said, "The Schechinah dwells not in the midst of laughter<sup>4</sup>;" which Yarchi explains by saying that "the mind

<sup>4</sup> The passage here alluded to is in Bab. Talmud, Psachim, Lect. x. and is as follows: לְדָוִד מְזֻמָּר, מַלְמֵד שְׁשֶׁרְתָּה עָלָיו שְׂכִינָה וְאַחֵר כֵּן אָמַר שִׁירָה, מְזֻמָּר לְדָוִד, מַלְמֵד שֶׁאֵמַר שִׁירָה וְאַחֵר כֵּן שְׁרָתָה עָלָיו שְׂכִינָה, לְלַמֵּד שֶׁאֵין הַשְׂכִּינָה שׁוֹרָה לֹא מִתּוֹךְ עֲצוּלוֹת וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ עֲצָבוֹת וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ שְׁחוֹק וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ קְלוּת-רֹאשׁ וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ דְּבָרִים בְּטָלִים אֲלֵא מִתּוֹךְ דְּבַר שְׂמִחָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְעַתָּה קָחִי לִי מִנְּגִן וְיָדִי בְּנִגֻן הַמִּנְגֵּן וְיָדִי עָלָיו יְיָ. That is to say, "Unto David a Psalm." This informs us that

of the laughing person is not well regulated, and though he be not guilty of scorning, still he has no regulation of mind;" where it seems that his meaning was to explain why our sages praised what they called "the laughter of the commandment," and again found fault with it; and that he means that laughter in a child of man was condemned by them at all events, because it engrosses and unsettles the human mind. And you may observe with surprise that the sages have not thought proper to praise laughter in a child of man, and nevertheless have attributed it to the Creator, blessed be his name, (they say, "I said of laughter, מהולל הוא, i. e. the laughter wherewith the Deity laughs with the saints;" and so of vexation they say, "The vexation wherewith God is vexed with the righteous, &c.") because in the case of a man who laughs or is vexed, his mind is not well regulated or settled in him, and through means of laughter and vexation he proceeds to folly and madness, and therefore in a human bosom they are culpable; but

that the Schechinah dwelt upon him (first), and that after that he uttered the song of praise: "A Psalm unto David." This informs us that he sung the song of praise first, and then the Schechinah dwelt upon him afterwards; for the Schechinah dwells neither amidst apathy nor amidst melancholy, laughter, levity, or idle prattling, but amidst the cheerfulness of the commandment; (i. e. arising from the fulfilling of it, or in accordance with, and in subordination to it); for it is written, "But now bring me a minstrel;" "and it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." It is true, as Mendlessolin says, that the Rabbins are here guilty of apparent inconsistency; but I think it is clear that where they spoke in the Medrasch on Ecclesiastes, of "the laughter of, or agreeable to, the commandment," they meant exactly the same as what they express in the above passage of the Talmud, by "the cheerfulness (שמחה) of the commandment;" which is so continually recommended throughout the book of Ecclesiastes; just as where they speak of the "laughter of the Deity with the saints in the world to come," they can only mean his sublime joy, and undisturbed felicity, not the convulsion which we call laughter.

the great God is not affected by them at all, but he, so to speak, laughs in righteousness, and is vexed in judgment in his simple will, without suffering<sup>1</sup> diminution or change in any of his attributes; and consequently in every place where the scripture praises laughter or vexation, it is proper that you should refer it as to its secondary sense to the blessed God, because with him those qualities are free from all defect or cause of blame. Wherefore our sages in their recondite commentary have referred the word מְהוֹלֵל to the laughter of the Holy One with his saints in the world to come; and whereas this laughter is highly indeed to be praised, he says in conclusion, of the laughter which is not of the commandment, "What doeth it?" For it is good to restrain oneself from that paltry mirth<sup>2</sup>. And their recondite commentary on the verse, "Vexation is better than laughter," is very much in accordance with my explication of the passage; for the primary meaning there is, as you will see hereafter in my commentary, that the intelligent poor man, of whom he has spoken in the preceding verses, is not altogether destitute of happiness, as the mass of fools imagine; for in truth man knows not what is good for him in the term of his life under the sun, and sometimes his temporary prosperity will be to his hurt; and on this account he says, "Vexation is better than laughter," for in gloominess of looks the heart may be cheerful. He means that sadness is not always evil, nor laughter absolutely good for man, and sometimes that the heart is happy when the face is sorrowful; but because it is not proper to commend vexation in a child of man, because this passion wounds his soul, and brings him under "the category<sup>3</sup> of error," as our sages say, on this account our sages interpreted it of the

<sup>1</sup> Forgive us the thought.    <sup>2</sup> End of the specimen, vide p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> In Perke Avoth, Lect. 3. רבי עקיבא אומר שחוק וקלות ראש מרגילין את האדם לערוה. Rabbi Akivah said, "Laughter and levity of mind accustom men to lewdness."

vexation of providence against the righteous in this world ; for even if the Deity be vexed against the wise poor man, and he seems to the sons of men as though he were altogether destitute of happiness and struggling against life ; still it is better for him to be the object of this vexation, than of the laughter wherewith God laughs against the wicked, who prospers in his hour, and eats his only portion in this world.

And now let us proceed to the contradictions which Aben Ezra mentions ; and we shall reply to them according to our method in the commentary on the text, viz. according to the simple interpretation of it.

Now the first difficulty is in the use of the word כעס. It is written, "Vexation is better than laughter," and the contrary of this, "Vexation rests in the bosom of fools;" and so "In much wisdom is much vexation," and its opposite, "Put away vexation from thy heart." Now the word כעס is used in Hebrew<sup>1</sup> for the boiling wrath of the mind and its indignation against an act of wrong and violence. For it is part of the nature of the intelligent soul to experience pain in beholding oppression of the poor and perversion of judgment and justice ; and to put on the garment of indignation to take vengeance on him who does the wrong. And this outrage may be either a real or only a seeming one ; for sometimes a man is vexed with his neighbour from supposing that he has done him wrong or violence when such is not the case, but the thing was for his good. Now vexation against real wrong is proper and laudable in itself, as is clear to every intelligent man ; though as respects the feelings of the heart, the man who gives way to vexation cannot escape pain and suffering, and his mind is not in a settled state as it should be ; and thus it is that vexation brings a man "under the category of error," as we have said ; and it is quite proper for a man to try with all his might to hate evil and abominate violence, and to

<sup>1</sup> As a noun.

take vengeance on the perfidious, provided only that he continue free from all passion or ebullition of feeling whatever, if this be possible for one born of woman; for this is a part of that middle course which our sages have so highly commended<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Vid. Maimonides, *Yad Hachazakah*, "Precepts on the Government of the Temper," Chap. i. § 3, p. 151, in Mr Bernard's translation:—

"III. But between each disposition and the disposition opposed to it [namely] that at the other extreme, there are intermediate dispositions, which are also in opposition to each other.

"IV. The two opposite extremes in different dispositions, are not the right way; nor does it become a man to proceed in the same, nor to discipline himself to the same; if, therefore, he finds that he is inclined towards one of them by his nature, or that he is disposed to become inclined towards one of them, or that he has already acquired one of them and practised the same, he ought to turn back for the better, and to proceed in the way of the good which is the right way.

"V. Now the right way is that middle state, which is found in all the dispositions of man, namely, that disposition which is equally remote from the two extremes, so that it is not nearer to the one [extreme] than it is to the other. The sages of old have therefore directed, that a man should always estimate (i. e. that he should be aware of the power or force of) his dispositions, and that he should calculate and direct the same, [so as to keep] the intermediate way, to the end that he may preserve a perfect harmony [even] in his bodily constitution.

"VI. For instance, he ought neither to be a passionate and irritable man, nor yet like a dead man who has no feeling at all; but [he should keep] between [these two extremes]; so as never to be irritated, except by some serious matter, such as ought to be resented, in order that the same thing may not be done a second time. He ought likewise to wish for such things only as the body stands in need of, and without which it is not possible to subsist, just as it is said: 'The righteous eateth to the satisfying of the soul,' (Prov. xiii. 25). Again, he ought not to toil too much in his business, unless [it be] to obtain those things which are necessary for his temporary life, just as it is said, 'A little that a righteous man hath is better,' (Ps. xxxvii. 16). Neither ought he to shut his hand, nor

"to



But vexation against only apparent violence is folly. It arises from want of knowledge, and dwells chiefly in the bosom of fools, because they cannot distinguish between good and evil. And now all these verses will be seen to be plain and straightforward. He says, "Vexation is better than laughter;" i. e. (as we have observed above) it is better for the poor but wise man mentioned in the preceding verses to suffer vexation and annoyance at seeing violence and oppression, than to indulge in the laughter of the wicked who fling arrows of death, and say, Are we not in sport? But in chapter vi. he speaks

"to waste all his mammon; but he ought to give alms in proportion to the means he possesses, and also to lend to him who stands in need, as becomes [a generous man]. Moreover, he ought to be neither a jocose or a gay man, nor a sullen or melancholy man; but should always manifest a pleasing cheerfulness, and a friendly countenance; and so it ought to be with regard to all his other dispositions; this way being the way of the wise.

"VII. The man whose dispositions are altogether modified and intermediate, is called חכם a wise man; but he who is still more careful about himself, and who [occasionally and seasonably] declines somewhat from intermediate dispositions towards the one side or the other, is called חסיד a pious man.

"VIII. For instance, if one were to recede from haughtiness of mind so far as [to reach] the opposite extreme, and [consequently] become an exceedingly humble-minded man, one would then be called a pious man, this being the virtue of piety; but if one were to recede [from it] as far as the middle [point] only, and become an unassuming man, one would be called a wise man, this being the virtue of wisdom; and so it would be with all other dispositions.

"IX. Now the pious men of old used [occasionally] to bend their dispositions from the intermediate way, towards the two extremes; one disposition they would bend towards the lowest extreme, and again another disposition they would urge on towards the highest extreme, [as the case might require]; now this is [said to be] more even than [what] the line of justice [would require].

"X. With regard, however, to ourselves, we are commanded to walk in the intermediate ways, which are the ways of the good and of the righteous."

against him who murmurs against the providence of God in this world, and does not take into consideration the termination of the thing, and what shall be in the end of it. He had said in the preceding verse, "Be not quickly excitable in thy spirit to vexation, &c." as much as to say, Since all the ways of God are righteousness and judgment, it follows that the tranquillity of the wicked, and the chastisement of the just in this world, is not really evil (forgive us heaven for the thought); for God is glorified by it; but only seemingly evil to the sons of men who lack understanding. Therefore be not quickly excitable to vexation at the accidents of the sons of men, for this sort of vexation is cherished only in the bosom of fools. As to what he says, "that in much philosophy is much vexation," that is said with reference to his meaning that it is impossible for man to escape distress and sorrow altogether, when he observes how man oppresses his neighbour, and that the wicked swallows up him who is more righteous than himself; and from increase of wisdom, a man becomes more sensitive to wrong and violence, and thereby more vexation is generated; for only one among a thousand can be found who can always command his temper so as not to be vexed. But at the end of the book he advises man to dispel vexation from his heart, and to strengthen himself against the tumults of nature with all his might. Now there is a great difference between the precepts of wisdom, and the practice of the wise man. For wisdom commands to do good, and to depart from evil, and prescribes by way of an instance of it, "Remove vexation entirely from thy heart;" meaning, that if the liberty and power to do so had been committed to man, it were proper for him to shun the distress and perturbation of vexation altogether. But the wise man, as being a mere human creature, is not free from defect by reason of his humanity, and he is the wisest whose defects are the fewest; and since it is one of the consequences of investigation and reflection, to increase

our sensibility to harm and benefit, and to enlarge our perceptions of the distinctions of good and evil, it is quite consistent that he should say, that "in much philosophy is much vexation."

And the second contradiction which Aben Ezra mentions is, that it is written, that "that which is good, that which is excellent, is to eat and drink," and the contrary of this, "It is good to go to the house of mourning." According to the explanation I have given from the connexion of the verses, there is no contradiction at all here; it is evidently more good and excellent for a man "to eat and drink, and see good done to others by his labour," than that he should labour for wind, and "eat all his days in the dark, and be vexed, and suffer illness and peevishness." And nevertheless going to the house of mourning is not always bad, nor going to the house of feasting always good and advantageous for man; and this is all the meaning of the passage where he says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to that of feasting," as I shall by God's help explain at the place.

The third contradiction is one which our sages have mentioned, that it is written, "I praised mirth," and the contrary of this, "I said of mirth, What avails it?" And here we have already had their explanation, where they speak of what they call "the laughter of the commandment," as we have mentioned. And besides as to what he says of mirth, viz. "What avails it?" the fact is, he had wished to find perfect good and happiness for man in mirth, and drinking, and song, and after he had made trial also of this method, he repented and said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it?

The fourth contradiction is that we have, "What advantage has the wise man above the fool?" and the contrary of this, "Wisdom has an advantage over folly." Now I have noticed in the book Zohar a recondite comment on this latter verse, nearly approaching to a simple commentary, and this is surprising.

The original in the Zohar is as follows:— ר' חיים פתח ואמר ר' ראיתי אני שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות וגומר, בכמה אחר אסתכלנא במילי דשלמה מלכא ואשגחנא בחכמתא סגיא דילי' ואסתיר מלוי' בנו לבו היכלא קדישא, האי קרא אית לאסתכלא בי' אמאי אחר וראיתי אני וכי שאר בני עלמא לא ידעי ולא חמאן, אפילו מאן דלא ידע חכמתא מן יומי ולא אשגח בה ידע שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות כיתרון האור מן החשך, והוא שבה גרמי' ואמר ראיתי אני אלא הכי תאנא כו', וראיתי אני שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות כלומר מן הסכלות ממש אתי תועלתא לחכמתא, דאלמלא לא אשתכח שטותא בעלמא לא אשתמודע חכמתא ומלוי', ותאנא חיובא הוא על בר נש דאוליק חכמתא למילק מן שטות' ולמנדע לה בגין דאתי תועלתא לחכמת' בגיני' כמה דאתי תועלתא לנהורא מחסוכא, דאלמלא חסוכא לא אשתמודע נהורא ולא אתיא פעולתא לעלמא מיני' כו', תקינא דשוורא מאי היא אוכמא ואלמלא אוכמא לא אשתמודע שוורא, אחר רבי ינחק משל למתוק במר דלא ידע אינש טעמא דמתיקא עד דטעי' מרירא מאן עבד להאי מתיקא הוי אומר האי מרירא וה"נו דכתיב (קהלת ו') גם אם זה לעומת זה Rabbi Chaiim opened his mouth and said, 'As to the passage, I saw that wisdom has a superiority over folly, &c. in many places I have made myself acquainted with the words of king Solomon, and contemplated the great wisdom which was his; and I have found that he concealed his words in the innermost recesses as it were of a holy temple<sup>1</sup>. This passage too is such that it must be looked into. Why does he say, I have seen, as if the rest of the sons of men do not know or perceive it? even he who has not known wisdom all his life, and has not contemplated it, knows that wisdom has a superiority over folly, as light has over darkness; but Solomon praises himself, and says, I have seen; but in so saying he teaches'"—and so on. "But I have seen that wisdom has an advantage מְשַׁכְּלוֹת, i. e. that absolutely from folly is derived an advantage to wisdom, since if there were no folly in the

<sup>1</sup> That is, that he wrote in a very mysterious manner.

world, wisdom and its lessons would not be appreciated; and he means to teach that it is necessary for a son of man who would learn wisdom, to learn from folly and to be acquainted with it, because that advantage accrues to wisdom by means of it, like the advantage which accrues to light from darkness, since but for darkness light would not be perceived to be light, nor any effect from it come into the world,"—and so on,—“and the beauty of whiteness, wherein does it consist? in (its contrast to) blackness; and but for blackness, whiteness would not be appreciated.’ Rabbi Isaac gives an illustration from the relation of bitter to sweet, since no one appreciates the taste of sweetness, till he have tasted bitterness. ‘What has made this to be sweetness? we must say, that bitterness has.’ And this is the meaning of what is written, ‘He has set this over against the other,’ &c.” *Quem vide*. But here, too, according to the explanation I shall by God’s help there give, according to the simple interpretation of the text, there is no contradiction at all. But on the contrary, the one was an expression of surprise on the part of the wise man, “I have seen that in respect of intelligence the wise man has an advantage over the fool, but nevertheless I perceive that in respect of chance they are all on an equality, and the same chance happens to both of them!” (see my commentary on this passage.) And again, as for his expression, “What advantage has the wise man over the fool?” this is merely an argument of the murmuring objectors, as by God’s help I shall explain.

As for the fifth contradiction, our sages have mentioned it. “I praised the dead, &c.” and the contrary of this, “that a live dog is better than a dead lion.” I have already gone to some length upon this above.

The sixth contradiction is, that “there is no work, or device, or knowledge, or wisdom in the grave,” and the contrary of this, that “there is a time for every work there.” I have



gone to some length on these passages in my commentary; and, according to my method, both of them really refer to one subject, the immortality of the soul, and recompence in the life to come; and as to his expression **כִּי אֵין מַעֲשֶׂה** its interpretation is, "if there be no work, &c." (See my commentary at the place; for there is no good in repetition.)

And so with regard to the seventh and eighth contradictions, if you will acquaint yourself with my commentary on them, you will see and understand that his expression, "And shall not good happen to the wicked, &c." is not at all repugnant to his remark, "There is the case of a bad man prolonging his days in his injustice;" for the former verse, as explained from those preceding it, is to be read with a note of interrogation. "Why should not the wicked attain at least to apparent prosperity in this world?" and consequently it is not repugnant to the latter verse, "There is the case," &c.; besides, this verse is spoken with reference to the administration of kingdoms, as I have there explained. And so in saying, "It shall be good to the fearers of God," he speaks of the true good and prosperity in the world to come, as is there set forth; and in his saying that "There are bad men to whom it happens as if they had done the work of the just, &c." he speaks of the unsatisfactory state of things under the sun; and the beginning of the passage is, "There is an unsatisfactory thing which takes place under the sun, that there are just men to whom it happens as if they had done the work of the wicked," &c.

Now the reader will see in this my commentary, that I have not paid any attention to the divisions of chapter and verse in ordinary use among us. And in this respect I have walked in the steps of former commentators; for most of them did not regard the pauses of the chapters and verses. For these signs are received among our people as intended for no other purpose but that of saving trouble to the reader in seeking a

verse or word in the bible<sup>1</sup>; not for that of judging by means of them at what place a subject begins or where it ends; but the liberty was allowed to every commentator of placing those marks<sup>2</sup> according to his own plan in the interpretation of the sense; and you will see many passages of this roll where it is impossible, on any of the interpretations, for the end of the sense of the subjects to coincide with the present places of the marks. Now at first it occurred to me to place the signs of the chapters and verses in the places agreeable with my interpretation. But since I had observed that in the index<sup>3</sup> of the Talmud, the printers have proceeded with reference to the signs in ordinary use among us, and I was afraid to make a change which might only cause trouble to the reader, when he wishes to discover a passage he seeks for; and I also observed that sometimes they had altered the place of a pause for a good reason<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> This is a very important remark of our author's. From the scrupulous exactness of Mendlessohn in deviating in no instance from the Masoretic text, either in this roll, or in the Pentateuch, it is quite clear that he agreed with the opinion of all the literary authorities of his own nation, (Elias Levita alone excepted), in holding the extreme antiquity of the system of points, and therefore of the divisions of chapter and verse, which form a part of it, and in ascribing them to Ezra and his coadjutors, who, it is said, fearing that the pronunciation and interpretation of the sacred text might be entirely lost in case of the recurrence of such national calamities as the Babylonish captivity, which had already occasioned a great corruption of the Jewish language, took these means to perpetuate it. Nevertheless, he gives this decided opinion about the pauses of chapter and verse.

<sup>2</sup> ציון, a mark.

<sup>3</sup> The index of the Talmud here spoken of is an index of the passages of scripture quoted in it.

<sup>4</sup> There are several books in the Bible, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Lamentations, and Malachi, which end with a harsh expression; and in all the Hebrew Bibles the preceding verse *ἐφ' ἧμας χάριν* is printed over again, and so read in all the synagogues. They are thus designated: י, stands for Isaiah; ק for יְקִינָה, or Lamentations; ק for יְקִיֶּלֶת, or the Preacher; and ת for תְּרִי עֶשֶׂר, 2 + 10 = 12, i. e. the minor pro-

viz. not to stop at a harsh expression; I was induced by these considerations to leave the marks in their original places<sup>5</sup>.

And know, dear reader, that it is not out of the stores of my own mind that I have produced all the things stated in this my Commentary, but that the greater part of them I have collected from other books of preceding authors; and the book of the מְכַלֵּל יוֹפֵי<sup>6</sup> of Rabbi Solomon<sup>7</sup> has been a help and advantage to me in the commentary on words, and the grammar of the language; and in that on the sense of the text, I have closely followed those great commentators, Yarchi and Aben Ezra, except in places where it was necessary to differ from them; and in every place where I have found their method agreeable with the simple sense of the words, and the original intention of the wise king, I have put down their words, word for word, without alteration or change; and because our wise men have counselled us to receive truth from whoever speaks it, I have also sought in the works<sup>8</sup> of the commentators who are not of the sons of Israel; and wherever I found in their mouths a word of truth, I offered it to the Lord, and it became holy.

phets, of which Malachi is last, (תְּרִי being Chaldee for two). These letters are formed into one word ית"קק, and we find in the Masoretic notes at the end of each of these books סִימָן ית"קק written.)

<sup>5</sup> But at the same time he has pointed out where the divisions would be according to his plan.

<sup>6</sup> Perfection of beauty.

<sup>7</sup> This book of R. Solomon was written in A.D. 1490, and printed in 1567, at Salonica.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "sacks," in allusion to Gen. xlv. 12.

IN presenting to the reader the new Version of Ecclesiastes, to which the preceding pages have been introductory, I am desirous to preclude an impression which an imperfect view of it might lead him to form, that it is in any respect a paraphrase. Though not divided into the chapters and verses of our received translation, (these being merely noted in the margin to facilitate reference), it is a most close and literal rendering of the original. Whenever a word is introduced to which there is no word corresponding in the Hebrew text, it is printed in italics, a practice which has long been adopted in translations of the Bible into modern languages. Nor let the reader be startled by the total discrepancies which he will meet with in many passages between this version and that which he has hitherto been accustomed to use. Much he will perceive to be unaltered; but whenever those discrepancies occur, let me intreat him to consider carefully the arguments in their behalf detailed in the annotations to the text, where he will always find each fully discussed. Our received translation of the Sacred Text is in general one of admirable, nay wonderful, correctness, and for majesty of style unrivalled; but with regard to this book, perhaps more than any other, very much additional elucidation has been effected since the time of King James I.; and surely the discoveries and manifest improvements of a later period ought not to be rejected in the translation of the Bible, any more than in other branches of ancient literature, wherein the accumulation of correct knowledge must necessarily be the progressive work of successive ages. It must be allowed by the most prejudiced admirers of the received translation, that the version of Ecclesiastes contained in it is in many places either so obscure as to be unintelligible, or so apparently opposed in doctrine to the rest of scripture, that a sweeping system of adaptation and far-

fetch'd commentary must be adopted in order to justify the inspired writer. And these obscurities and difficulties afford a reasonable suspicion, which reference to the original will increase to certainty, of the inaccuracy of the translation of a book which is not prophetic in its character, but evidently intended for the general instruction of mankind. On the contrary, that which I here present to the reader, every word and expression of which has been weighed with the most assiduous and prolonged attention, will be found to convey throughout a clear and obvious sense which needs no paraphrase; and the somewhat bulky annotations which follow, are necessary, not to explain its meaning, but to establish its claim to be considered a faithful rendering of the original. I would therefore again intreat the reader not to content himself with the sense therein presented to him, but to verify it by reference to the annotations.

I have followed the example of the authors of our received version, in prefixing to each of the sections into which the sense of the book divides itself, an introductory analysis, containing a concise view of the topics therein treated of. These it will be well for the reader on no account to pass over, as they form in themselves perhaps the best sort of commentary, as preparing him to see clearly and follow easily the sometimes subtle and intricate argument of the section. And occasionally he will find that should the first perusal of a section have failed to satisfy him of the perspicuity of its contents, a second reference to the analysis will make it perfectly clear to him. This remark applies especially to Sections VI. X. and XI., which are of no ordinary difficulty, and the following version of which is entirely new.

For my neglect of the divisions of chapter and verse in ordinary use, there is ample apology in Mendlessohn's remarks on that subject in the conclusion of his preface (*vide* p. 89); and for my having placed the marks of those divisions on the



side of the page, instead of inserting them into the text and dividing it at each, abundant precedent is furnished by numerous editions of the Old and New Testament in the originals, and several translations in our own language. I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to adhere to the phraseology of our biblical version, on account of the very natural partiality which is generally felt for it, and its real dignity and simplicity, which render it a more befitting garb for the revelations of divine truth, than could be furnished out of a more modern vocabulary, though this might convey to the modern reader a more correct and intelligible representation of the sense of the original. Nevertheless it has been found necessary to employ words not to be met with in a Biblical Concordance in several places, where the peculiar modification of meaning of Hebrew words seems not to have been perceived by those translators. As instances of this, it will be found that the word **הָבֵל** is sometimes rendered "unsatisfactory," and sometimes "transitory," in passages where the word "vanity" by no means adequately represents it, and that **אַל תִּתְחַכֵּם יוֹתֵר** is rendered "affect not excessive penetration." It must be recollected that this book is unique in its character, and the only specimen in the sacred volume of open discussion on philosophy and political economy, and that consequently, it might be expected that a vocabulary sufficient for the translation of the other portions of it should be found inadequate to the full and correct exhibition in our language of the reasonings of the royal sage. I trust, then, that such deviations from ordinary biblical phraseology as I have laboured in vain to avoid, as well as whatever beside he may regard as blemishes in this version, will meet with the reader's indulgence, if he finds, as I may venture to hope that he will, that by means of it this portion of the sacred volume approves itself to him, in a greater degree than it did before, as "plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."

It will be seen that I have given along with each verse of the Hebrew text an original Latin translation, which generally coincides closely in sense with my English version. My object in so doing was to determine the sense more rigorously than can possibly be done by a literal translation in a single language, which from its ambiguities may occasionally fail in conveying to the reader the exact meaning intended by the translator. An additional advantage of a Latin translation is, that it will render this volume not altogether useless to persons unacquainted with English, should it chance to fall into their hands.

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I subjoin the following specimen of the original of Mendlessohn's Preface, vide p. 78.

והנה רבותינו ז"ל שקלו וטרו בסוגי' הנ"ל מאי דבריו סותרים זה את זה, כתיב טוב כעס משחוק וכתיב לשחוק אמרתי מהולל, כתיב ושבתתי אני את השמחה וכתיב ולשמחה מה זה עושה, לא קשי' טוב כעס משחוק טוב כעס שנועם הקב"ה על הלדיקים משחוק שמשחק הקב"ה על הרשעים בעה"ז, ולשחוק אמרתי מהולל זה שחוק שמשחק הקב"ה עם הלדיקים בעה"ב, ושבת אני את השמחה זהו שמחה של מלוא, ולשמחה מה זה עושה זהו שמחה שאינה של מלוא, וכו', נראה מדבריהם שפירשו מהולל לשון שבת, כמו שפירש"י ז"ל ולפי פשוטו של מקרא יהי' מלשון הוללות וסכלות, וכן נראה ממשמעות המשך הכתובים אמרתי אני בלבי לכה נא אנסבה בשמחה וראה בטוב והנה גם זה הבל, לשחוק אמרתי מהולל ולשמחה מה זה עושה, וא"כ בודאי שגינה השחוק ויאמר עליו שהוא דבר שאין בו ממש, אלא שחכמי' ז"ל דרשו כן מאחר שהשתמש החכ' בתיבת מהולל, שהוראתו פעם השבת והמעלה היתירה ופעם הסכלו' והעדר הדעת, משמע שהכוונה

השני' שפעמים השחוק משובח, ואי אפשר לומר בשחוק של מלוא, כי כבר אמרו אין השכינה שורה לא מתוך שחוק בו' ופי' רש"י ז"ל שאין דעת השחוק מיושבת ואפי' אין בו לנזן מכל מקום אין בו ישוב עכ"ל, נראה שכוון רש"י בזה לפרש מדוע שבח' חכמים שמחה של מלוא ולא שבח' שחוק של מלוא, וקאמר שהי' להם השחוק צדן אדם מגונה בכל אופן, מפני שהוא מטריד ומבלבל את דעת האדם, וראה והתפלל שלא רצו חכמינו ז"ל לשבח את השחוק צדן אדם, ועם כל זה יחסוהו אל הצורא יתברך שמו, ואמרו לשחוק אמרתי מהולל, זהו שחוק ששחוק הקב"ה עם הנדיקים, וכן הכעס, אמרו טוב הכעס שכועס הקב"ה עם הנדיקים וכו' לפי שהאדם השחוק איז הכועס אין דעתו מיושבת עליו והוא בא על ידי השחוק והכעס לסכלות והוללות, ולכן הם מגוני' בחקו, אבל השם יתעלה שמו לא יתפעל על ידיהם כלל, והוא כביכול שחוק בלדק וכועס במשפט ברזונו הפשוט, מבלתי חסרון או שני' ח"ו באחת ממדותיו, וא"כ בכל מקום שהכתוב משבח את השחוק או הכעס יתכן שתשיבהו הכוונה השני' אל השם ית' לפי שאלו המדות הלול מנוקות מכל חסרון ומכל גנות, לבד דרשו חז"ל תיבת מהולל על שחוק הקב"ה עם הנדיקים בעה"ב, ואחרי שהשחוק הזה משובח מאוד, מסיים ואומר לשמחה שאינה של מלוא מה זה עושה, כי טוב למנוח את עלמו מן השמחה הגרועה ההיא.

THE BOOK  
OF  
S O L O M O N,  
CALLED  
E C C L E S I A S T E S.

---

THE FIRST SECTION.

*Solomon asserts the vanity of all human pursuits. As a general proof and illustration of this assertion, he shews that the four elements and consequently all earthly things are moving in a round of constant recurrence, so that whatever happens must have happened before, though there be no record of it, and must happen again; and that therefore human labour can produce nothing new.*

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CHAP.  
I.

<sup>1</sup> **T**HE words of the Preacher<sup>a</sup>, the son of David, <sup>a</sup> Heb. "Com-  
king in Jerusalem. <sup>piler."</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher<sup>a</sup>, vanity  
<sup>3</sup> of vanities, all is vanity. What advantage has  
man in all his labour which he performs under  
<sup>4</sup> the sun? One generation *of earthly things* de-  
parts, and another generation comes, while *the bulk*  
<sup>5</sup> *of* the earth remains for ever the same. The sun  
also arises and the sun sets, and is hasting<sup>b</sup> to <sup>b</sup> "Panting  
his place there while rising *here*; going to the for."

south, and returning to the north; the wind goes 6  
round and round, and the *same* wind returns on  
its circuits again. All the rivers go into the sea, 7  
and yet the sea is never *too* full; to the place  
where the rivers are going, thither they will be  
<sup>c Literally,  
"toiling in  
motion."</sup> going again. All things are in activity<sup>c</sup>; man 8  
cannot describe it all, as the eye cannot be satis-  
fied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing.  
What has been, is that which will be, and what 9  
has been done, is that which will be done; and  
there is nothing new under the sun. Should there 10  
be anything whereof it should be said, "Behold  
this is new!" it has already been in the ages which  
<sup>d Or, "out  
of," i. e.  
"before  
our time."</sup> were before us<sup>d</sup>. The former things are not re- 11  
membered, and likewise the latter things which  
will be, will not be remembered in the time of  
those that shall be hereafter.

---

## THE SECOND SECTION.

*He points out in detail the unprofitableness of the several departments of human labour; and first as to philosophy and science, he says that having pursued them to their utmost extent, amid all the advantages for so doing that he possessed, he had found them so unsatisfactory as hardly to bear comparison with folly and ignorance.*

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12 **I** THE Preacher was king over Israel in Jeru-  
 13 salem; and I applied myself to examine and in-  
 vestigate philosophically concerning all that is done  
 under the sun. Sad is this employment which God  
 has given *an impulse* to the sons of men to be  
 14 engaged in. I contemplated all the works which  
 are done under the sun; and, behold! all were  
 15 vanity and a mere windy notion. The perverted  
 could not be set right, and the deficient could  
 16 not be supplied. I spake within myself, saying,  
 “Lo, I have extended and propagated philosophy  
 above all that were before me in Jerusalem, and  
 my mind has seen much philosophy and science.”  
 17 And so I set myself to compare<sup>a</sup> philosophy with  
 madness and folly. I found that this too was a  
 18 mere windy idea. For in much philosophy is much  
 vexation, and he who increases science increases  
 disappointment.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. “To know philosophy and to know folly and ignorance.”

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### THE THIRD SECTION.

*He next made trial of what is farthest removed from philosophic investigation, mirth and hilarity, and came to a similar conclusion.*

CHAP.  
II.

1 **I** SAID in my mind, “Come now, let me try thee with mirth,” and “enjoy pleasure”; and, lo,  
 2 this too was in vain. I said of laughter, “It is mad,” and of mirth, “What does this avail<sup>a</sup>?” <sup>a</sup> Heb. “do.”

## THE FOURTH SECTION.

*He then tried to combine these two extremes, and applied his wisdom and science to the refinements of taste and luxury, hoping to find satisfaction in the union of animal and intellectual enjoyments, but with the same want of success as he had before experienced.*

I SOUGHT in my mind how to cherish my bodily 3  
 frame with wine, and my mind still training it-  
 self in philosophy to retain folly likewise, till I  
 might find what is the best thing for the sons to  
 do under heaven, during the term of their life-time.  
 I extended my works; I built myself houses; I 4  
 planted myself vineyards: I made myself gardens 5  
 and parks, and planted them with every sort of  
 fruit tree: I made myself reservoirs of water, from 6  
 which to water the plantation for rearing trees: I 7  
 procured men-servants and maid-servants, and I  
 had a household; I had also large herds of great  
 and small cattle above all that were before me in  
 Jerusalem: I also amassed to myself silver and 8  
 gold, and the treasures of kings and provinces: I  
 trained for myself men-singers and women-singers,  
 and those delights of the sons of man, several  
 captive women. And I became great and opulent 9  
 above all that were before me in Jerusalem; be-  
 sides my philosophy was an assistance<sup>a</sup> to me. And 10  
 nothing that my eyes desired did I withhold from  
 them; nor did I refrain myself from any enjoy-

<sup>a</sup> Literally,  
 "stood by  
 me"—  
 "stood me  
 in stead."

ment, for my mind derived enjoyment from all my occupation, and that was the profit<sup>b</sup> I looked for from all my labour.

<sup>b</sup> Literally,  
"portion  
derived  
from it."

- 11 But I turned to all the works which my hands  
had made, and to all the labour which I had toiled  
12 to perform: and, lo! it was all a mere breath and  
windy notion, and there was no profit under the  
sun.

---

### THE FIFTH SECTION.

*He tells us that he relinquished this experiment as hopeless, convinced that no one could ever give it a fairer trial than he had done; and next mentions several other instances of the fruitlessness of human labour for the attainment of wisdom or wealth, or the retention of them when acquired; the observation of which had inspired him with such contempt and despair of life, that even the reflection that the good things of this life are disposed of by the hand of God alone, and that it is on this account that our efforts often fail, only made the view of human affairs appear to him still more dark and unsatisfactory.*

- 13 SO I turned away from the contemplation of philosophy in union with<sup>a</sup> madness and folly: for  
in such a matter what can any one else effect who comes after a king? only what has<sup>b</sup> already been  
14 done. Now I perceived that philosophy has an advantage over ignorance, just as light has an

<sup>a</sup> Heb.  
"and."

<sup>b</sup> Heb.  
"what  
they have  
already  
done."

advantage over darkness; *for that as for* the philosopher, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness: and yet I found also that the same chance may happen to both of them: and 15  
 I said to myself, "Just like the chance of the fool, as to myself also<sup>c</sup> it may happen to me; and to what purpose then am I wiser than he?" so I said to myself, that this also was in vain. For the wise man as well as the fool will not 16  
 always be remembered, inasmuch as in future ages they will already both have been forgotten. And alas! how dies the wise man? like the fool! So 17  
 I hated life; for sad to me was all the work done under the sun, because all of it was a breath, and a mere windy notion: and I hated all my labour 18  
 which I had performed under the sun, inasmuch as I am to leave it to one who shall survive me, (and who knows whether he will be a wise man 19  
 or a fool?), and is to be master of all my work which my toil and wisdom have produced under the sun; and this is unsatisfactory. I even turned to give 20  
 my mind up to despair<sup>d</sup> about all the labour which I had performed under the sun; because there are<sup>e</sup> 21  
 men whose labour is skilful and scientific and successful, and who have to resign their profit from it to those who have had no part in that labour; and this is an unsatisfactory thing and a pre-  
 vailing evil; for what is the practice of man 22  
 with respect to all his labour and the ideas of his mind in which he employs himself under the sun? that all his days are wearisome, and his 23  
 occupation vexatious, so that even in the night

<sup>c</sup> Heb. "I too, it may happen to me."

<sup>d</sup> Heb. "To make my mind despair."

<sup>e</sup> Heb. "There is a man, &c."

24 his mind rests not, while it is all in vain. It is  
no *great* good for a man to eat and drink, and  
enjoy himself in his employment: and even this I  
25 perceived to be from the hand of God *alone*; (for  
26 who shall eat, and enjoy, if I could not?) but that  
it is to him who is good in His sight that He  
gives wisdom, and knowledge, and enjoyment: while  
to the sinner He assigns the occupation of accu-  
mulating and amassing *wealth* to resign *it* to him  
who is good in the sight of God: and this was  
unsatisfactory, and a mere windy notion.

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#### THE SIXTH SECTION.

*He now develops the true theory which he had arrived at after the doubts and experiments detailed above. He shews the fruitlessness of excessive diligence and anxiety about worldly things from the consideration that every thing happens in its own appointed time according to a decree of the most High, who has pre-ordained from eternity what is to happen at each moment, and what employment each individual is to perform, so as for the best final result to be produced. That such being the case, every thing must be looked on in the most cheerful light as excellent in its own season; and our true happiness is to be cheerful in the employment allotted to us, and if we are also blessed with bodily comforts and enjoyments, and so enabled to be cheerful, to be thankful for*



*them as the gift of God, who has immutably fixed the whole order of events, and willed that such should be our condition. So far from allowing that the existence of wrong and violence and the imperfect recompense of the good and bad in this life constitute an objection against this absolute superintendence of divine wisdom, he shews that we are thereby furnished with the most cogent argument for the certainty of a future state of retribution, observing that it is better so inferred than from the common opinion of the superiority given to men over beasts; since with respect to outward and primâ facie appearances, they are really all on a level; and as to their intellectual parts and the respective natures and destinies of them, that is too subtle a speculation for any but the most acute; so that on the ground of that opinion alone the common conclusion of mankind might well be, that the future being so uncertain they had best enjoy what manifestly is their portion here.*

CHAP.  
III.

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**T**HERE is an appointed time and a season for 1  
 every business under the sun: a time for 2  
 bringing forth, and a time to die; a time to plant,  
 and a time to abstain from planting; a time to 3  
 kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down,  
 and a time to build up; a time to mourn, and a 4  
 time to laugh; a time to lament, and a time to  
 dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time 5  
 to collect stones; a time to embrace, and a time  
 to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a 6

time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw  
 7 away; a time to rend, and a time to sew together;  
 8 a time to be silent, and a time to speak; a time  
 to love, and a time to hate; a time to make war,  
 and a time to be at peace.

9 What advantage then has the active man in  
 10 his labour? I contemplated the occupation which  
 God has given *an impulse* to the sons of men to  
 11 be engaged in; that He has made it all excellent  
 in its season, and has even implanted in their heart  
*the love of* the present life<sup>a</sup>, so that a man cannot<sup>a</sup> Or, "the  
 but find the employment, which God has appointed world."  
 12 *for him* from beginning to end. I found then that  
 there is no good for them, but in *each* being  
 13 cheerful, and doing good in his life; and besides  
 that every one who eats and drinks and sees good  
*effected* by all his labour, *to him* it is the gift of  
 14 God; for I know that all that God appoints is  
 fixed for ever, that none can add to it, and none  
 diminish from it, and that God has so appointed  
 it in order that men might fear before Him *alone*;  
 15 that as that which has been has already taken place,  
 so that which will be is as though it had already  
 taken place; and that it is God who requires the  
*recurrence of* the past<sup>b</sup>.

16 But again, I saw under the sun, that as for  
 the place of justice, injustice was there; and as for  
 17 the place of righteousness, wrong was there; where-  
 fore I said to myself, God will judge the righteous  
 and the wicked, for there is a doom there<sup>c</sup> for<sup>d</sup>  
 18 every business and for every action.—Respecting  
 the saying of the sons of men, that God has chosen<sup>d</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Literally,  
 "God re-  
 quires the  
 pursued,"  
 i. e. "the  
 past which  
 is pursued  
 by the  
 future."

<sup>c</sup> i. e. "be-  
 yond the  
 grave."  
<sup>d</sup> i. e. "dis-  
 tinguished  
 them by  
 his espe-  
 cial  
 choice."

them, I argued with myself that they ought to see  
 that by themselves they are but beasts; for that 19  
 the sons of men are *creatures of chance*, and the  
 beasts are *creatures of chance*, and the same chance  
 happens to them; the death of the one is like  
 the death of the other, and they have both the  
 same breath of life; and that man has no supe-  
 riority over the beast, for that both of them are  
 as a mere breath; that both go to the same place, 20  
 both are from the dust, and both are returning to  
 the dust; that he only who hath understanding 21  
 understands about the spirit of man that it goes  
 upwards, and the life of the beast that it goes  
 down to the earth; so that I concluded<sup>e</sup> that no- 22  
 thing would be better than for man to take delight  
 in his employment, as his *only* profit<sup>f</sup> from it: since  
 who should bring him to see into what shall be CHAP. IV.  
 after him? I therefore returned<sup>g</sup> to the contem- 1  
 plation of all the oppressions which are done under  
 the sun, and, behold! the weeping of the oppressed,  
 and they had no comforter; and on the side of  
 the oppressors there was power, so that they had  
 none to comfort them; and I was ready to praise 2  
 the state of the deceased in that they were already  
 dead, more than that of the living because they 3  
 were still alive, and as better than either his who  
 had not yet been, because he had not seen the evil  
 deeds done under the sun.

<sup>a</sup> Literally,  
"saw."

<sup>f</sup> Heb. "his  
profit," i.e.  
"delight,  
the profit  
derived  
from his  
employ-  
ment."

<sup>g</sup> i. e. "in  
order to  
derive the  
above con-  
clusion."

## THE SEVENTH SECTION.

*He now proceeds to give precepts of practical wisdom and duty. He recommends a middle course between that excessive exertion of which envy is the origin and consequence; and the indolence of the man who devours his patrimony till he has nothing left. He points out the folly of the solitary miser, the advantage of marriage and social intercourse, and the vanity of ambition as exhibited in the fickleness of popular favour.*

- 4 **I** HAVE also seen with respect to all industry, and  
all successful work, that it is *inseparable from*<sup>a</sup> each man's jealousy of his neighbour; so that that  
5 too is a mere breath and windy notion. The fool  
folds his hands, and devours as it were his own  
6 flesh. A quiet handful is better than both hands  
full of trouble and a mere windy notion.
- 7 And I returned to the contemplation of what  
8 is vain under the sun. There is the solitary man,  
who has none connected with him<sup>b</sup>, and has no  
son or brother, and yet of all whose labour there  
is no end, and whose eye is never satisfied with  
wealth; and, *if I were he*, for whom should I be  
toiling and denying myself enjoyment? This too  
9 then is a vain thing, and bad<sup>c</sup> employment. Two  
are better off than one alone, because they are well  
10 rewarded for their labour. For should they fall,  
the one will lift up his companion; but woe to  
the single man should he fall! because there is no

<sup>a</sup> Heb. "is, consists in, each man's envy of his neighbour."

<sup>b</sup> Heb. "and there is no second."

<sup>c</sup> Masora, "employment of a bad man."

second person to raise him up. Also, if two lie <sup>11</sup>  
*together*, they will be warm: but how shall the  
<sup>d</sup> How shall it be warm to the single man? single man<sup>d</sup> have warmth? And should an indi- <sup>12</sup>  
vidual offer violence to either of the two, they  
will both stand up against him; and a triple cord  
is not quickly broken.

“An indigent but wise youth is better than <sup>13</sup>  
an old and foolish king, who is too old to be  
advised, even though he have come out of a house <sup>14</sup>  
of bondmen, for he too who is born in his royalty  
is born poor.” Thus have I seen all the people, <sup>15</sup>  
that walk under the sun, *taking part* with the  
youth next in succession, who is to stand up after  
him. *For* it seems to all the people that there <sup>16</sup>  
is no end to all that<sup>e</sup> is in their own time; and  
yet the next generation will not take delight in  
him; but this too is a mere breath and windy  
notion.

<sup>e</sup> A phrase for “the existing government.”

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### THE EIGHTH SECTION.

*He inculcates the duty of profound reverence in the worship of God with the punctual payment of vows, and of avoiding the ostentatious and wordy petitions of the wicked. As a next step to the fear of God, he teaches submission without murmur to existing governments, and shews that defects in their administration are not rashly to be laid to the fault of the king. The painful responsibility of kingly station reminds him of the vanity of large possessions and trains of*



*dependants. He shews that the head of a large domain cannot enjoy it all himself, for that his wealth is divided among others; nay, that his very rank and luxury are a burden to him; and that in many cases his elevation makes him a mark for the plots of villains, who strip him at last of all that it had cost him so much pain and self-denial to acquire. How much better then, he concludes, than this selfish anxiety which so often ends in disappointment, is a spirit of cheerful and benevolent contentment mingled with thankfulness for whatever superfluities it may be our lot to possess! To induce us thereto, he reminds us that life is short, and that God intends us to be happy.*

CHAP.  
V.

- 
- 1 **B**E circumspect<sup>a</sup> when thou goest into the house  
 of God; and to draw near to hear is better  
 than the sacrificing of the fools, *of the fools, I*  
*say*, for they know not that they are doing wicked-  
 2 ness. Be not rash with thy mouth, and even in  
 thy mind be not in haste to utter a word before  
 God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth;  
 3 therefore let thy words be few. For as a dream  
 is made up<sup>b</sup> of a multitude of matters<sup>c</sup>; so is the  
 prayer<sup>d</sup> of a fool of a multitude of expressions<sup>e</sup>.  
 4 When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to  
 pay it; for there is nothing pleasing *to God* in  
 5 fools: pay that thou vowest. It is better that  
 thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest  
 6 vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause

<sup>a</sup> Heb.  
 "Keep thy  
 foot."

<sup>b</sup> Heb.  
 "comes  
 in," i. e.  
 "in conse-  
 quence  
 of," or,  
 "under  
 the form  
 of."  
<sup>c</sup> "Uncon-  
 nected and  
 irrele-  
 vant."  
<sup>d</sup> Heb.  
 "voice."

\* Heb. "thy flesh." thee<sup>e</sup> to sin; nor say to the priest, that it was  
 † "a mistake." an oversight<sup>f</sup>: why should God be provoked by  
 ‡ Heb. "voice." thy words<sup>g</sup> to<sup>h</sup> destroy the work of thy hands?  
 § Heb. "and." For in the multitude of dreamy<sup>i</sup> and vain matters 7  
 ¶ Heb. "dreams and vanities." words also may<sup>k</sup> be multiplied: but of God stand  
 \* Literally, thou in awe.

If thou seest in a province oppression of the 8  
 poor, and perversion of justice and right, be not  
 surprised at the matter; for the great are one  
 above the other in office, and there are great ones  
*again* above them; and the excellence of a coun- 9  
 try is in the entire state of it; *even* the master  
 of a field is served *by others*. As he who loves 10  
 money will not be satisfied with money; so he  
 who delights in a retinue has no advantage from  
 it; for that too is a vain thing. For in the in- 11  
 crease of property those who live<sup>l</sup> upon it are  
 also increased; and what advantage has the owner  
 of it, except the<sup>m</sup> looking on with his eyes? The 12  
 sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat  
 much or little: but the satiety of a rich man suffers  
 him not to sleep. There is a sore<sup>n</sup> evil I have 13  
 seen under the sun, riches kept to the injury of  
 their owner, when those riches perish through a  
 nefarious<sup>o</sup> design, and the son he has begotten 14  
 has nothing *left* in his hand; that as he came 15  
 out of his mother's womb naked, he should re-  
 turn as he came, and acquire nothing by his labour  
 which he may carry away in his hand. This, *I* 16  
*say*, is also a sore evil, that exactly as he came  
 so he should depart: and what advantage is it  
 then to him that he labour for wind? and, be-

<sup>l</sup> Heb. "eat it."

<sup>m</sup> i. e. "the pleasure of looking on."

<sup>n</sup> Literally, "a sickly evil," i. e. "a moral disease," or "defect," according to some, "a prevailing evil."

<sup>o</sup> Masora, "The design of a villain."

17 sides, that all his days he eat *as it were* in the dark, and suffer anxiety, and illness and peevishness should be upon him?

18 What I saw then to be good, what *I saw* to be excellent, is for a man to eat and drink and see good *effected* by means of all his labour which he does under the sun during the term of his lifetime which God has given him, for that that is his  
19 *only* profit *from it*; and that as for every one to whom God has given wealth and riches, and enabled him to eat of them and to obtain that profit *from them*, and to be cheerful in the midst of  
20 his labour, this is the gift of God *to him*; for let him remember that the days of his life are not many, and that God responds to the cheerfulness of his heart.

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#### THE NINTH SECTION.

*It occurred to him, however, in the way of objection against the goodness of God, that frequently, when he appears to have put within a man's reach every sort of earthly happiness which wealth can confer, he permits him not all his life to enjoy it, but keeps him toiling incessantly and insatiably; and in the same way with respect to the literary man, though he attain to much information he never satisfies himself with it, but seems condemned to go on amassing fresh stores of knowledge, without being able to apply what he has already ac-*

*quired to smooth the path of life. In answer to these discontented reflections, he shews that the overruling providence of God orders all things for the best, and that those circumstances which at first sight appear less cheerful and flattering, are often really the best for us, and as such would be preferred by the wise man. He therefore recommends contentment, patience, and resignation to the Divine will.*

CHAP.  
VI.

“**T**HERE is, *however*, an evil I have seen under 1  
the sun to be very prevalent on mankind.  
*The case of* the man to whom God gives wealth 2  
and riches and honour, and who wants nothing for  
himself of all that he could desire, and yet God  
enables him not to enjoy it, but a stranger enjoys  
it. This, *I say*, is an unsatisfactory thing, and a  
bad defect. If such a man beget a hundred chil- 3  
dren and live many years, and the days of his  
years be many, while he never<sup>a</sup> has full enjoy-  
ment of that prosperity *himself*, and no honourable  
burial is his, I should say an untimely birth is 4  
better off than he. For since the untimely birth 4  
comes forth in vain, and goes away in darkness,  
and its name is buried in darkness, and besides it 5  
has not seen or known the sun<sup>b</sup>, it has more 6  
tranquillity than he; and even had he lived twice  
a thousand years without enjoying prosperity, do  
they not both go to the same place? As man  
is<sup>c</sup> always labouring to supply his mouth, so his 7

<sup>a</sup> Heb. “his soul is not satisfied.”

<sup>b</sup> “of prosperity?”

<sup>c</sup> Heb. “all the labour of man is for his mouth.”

8 mind too is never satisfied; for what advantage  
 has the wise man above the fool? what *good* is  
 it to the indigent man who hath understanding  
 9 to be actively struggling against life? the mere  
 satisfaction<sup>d</sup> of the eyes is better than *that* activity<sup>d</sup> Heb. "the  
 of the mind; so that it likewise is as a vain and sight of the  
 windy notion."

10 Whatever it has been, the condition of each  
 was already fixed, and it was known what each man  
 was to be, so that he cannot enter into judgment  
 11 with Him who is stronger than he. For there are  
 many things which *only* increase vanity; what is  
 12 the advantage of them to man? For who knows  
 what is good for man in life, during the days of  
 his transitory life, that he should make them as his  
 CHAP. VII. shelter, since who shall tell a man what *calamity*  
 1 may be awaiting<sup>e</sup> him under the sun? A good<sup>e</sup> Literally,  
 name may be better than precious ointment; and "behind  
 the day of *one's* death better than the day of one's him."  
 2 birth. It may be better to go to the house of  
 mourning, than to go to the house of feasting,  
 since that<sup>f</sup> is the end of every man, and the<sup>f</sup> i. e.  
 3 living will lay it to heart *there*. Sorrow<sup>g</sup> may be "mourn-  
 better than laughter, for in sadness of countenance ing at his  
 4 the heart may be cheerful. The thought<sup>h</sup> of the funeral." Or, "vexa-  
 wise man is in the house of mourning, and the tion."  
 5 thought of fools in the house of mirth. It may<sup>h</sup> Heb.  
 be better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man, "heart,"  
 than for one to be listening to the song *of praise*  
 6 of fools. For as the noise of thorns under the pot,  
 7 so is the joking of fools; it also is in vain; for the  
 oppression *of fools* will drive a wise man mad, but



<sup>i</sup> Literally,  
"liberality."

their kindness<sup>i</sup> will break his heart. The end of <sup>8</sup>  
a thing may be better than its beginning, and the  
patient better off than the high spirited. Be not <sup>9</sup>  
hasty to feel vexation in thy mind; for vexation  
rests *only* in the bosom of fools. Say not, How <sup>10</sup>  
was it that the former days were better than

<sup>k</sup> Heb. "out  
of wisdom."

these? for thou wouldest not have asked wisely<sup>k</sup>  
about this. Wisdom is valuable along with an <sup>11</sup>  
inheritance, but of superior value for those who see  
the sun; "for *to be* under the shelter of wisdom <sup>12</sup>  
*is to be* under the shelter of money," but the su-  
periority of knowledge is that wisdom can maintain  
its owner *by itself*. Contemplate the appointments <sup>13</sup>  
of God; for who can set right what He has made  
perverted<sup>l</sup>? In the day of prosperity continue in <sup>14</sup>  
*what is good*<sup>m</sup>; and in the day of adversity observe!  
God hath made the one<sup>n</sup> to balance<sup>o</sup> the other<sup>p</sup>, in  
order that men might not find out anything against  
Him.

<sup>l</sup> Or,

"crook-  
ed."

<sup>m</sup> Heb. "be  
in good."

<sup>n</sup> Adversity.

<sup>o</sup> Literally,  
"exactly  
corre-  
sponding  
to."

<sup>p</sup> Prospe-  
rity.

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### THE TENTH SECTION.

*He says that in the present state of the world  
we do not always find justice and injustice meet  
with their due rewards; nay more, that the  
perfection of wisdom and justice can neither  
be looked for in others nor affected in our-  
selves, unless we would overwhelm ourselves  
with disappointment and vexation, and that we  
had therefore best adopt a middle course of  
forbearance and moderation. The investigation*

*of the primary cause of this unavoidable admixture of evil in human affairs he confesses to be a subject beyond his grasp. He tells us he therefore sought to discover its secondary causes, assuming sin to be the fruit of human folly and ignorance; and that this maxim, combined with the observation he had made on female depravity, had led him to the opinion that carnal desire, as confounding the distinctions between real and apparent or present good, is a general source of wickedness. Another source of it which he had noticed, was the progress of human invention and science, which generate and foster envy and other bad passions in the human breast. He concludes however with the remark that if we understood this subject aright, we should certainly see no reason to repine at the Divine appointment in this matter, but should be always cheerful and happy in the contemplation of it.*

---

- 15 BOTH these cases have I seen in my transitory  
 life; the just man perishing in his justice, and  
 16 the wily man living long<sup>a</sup> in his evil way. Look not<sup>a</sup>  
 for justice<sup>b</sup> too much, nor affect superior penetra-  
 17 tion; why shouldest thou destroy thyself<sup>c</sup>? Be  
 not too wily, nor be simple to an extreme; why  
 18 shouldest thou perish prematurely? It is best for  
 thee to retain a hold on the one course, and at  
 the same time not to withdraw thy hand from the  
 other; for he who fears God will come out of both  
 19 extremes. This maxim will be confirmed to a

<sup>a</sup> Heb. "prolonging."  
<sup>b</sup> Heb. "be not too just," i. e. "do not look for too much justice in thy dealings with others."  
<sup>c</sup> Or, "be destroyed."

wise man from any ten rulers that have been in a city, that there is no just man in the world, 20 who does right and never does wrong. Still do 21  
<sup>d</sup> Literally, "thy mind." not give attention<sup>d</sup> to all that they say, so as not to hear it if thy servant speak lightly of thee; for thou knowest in thine own mind that thou too 22 hast often spoken lightly of others.

All this I examined philosophically; I thought 23 I should understand it, but it was far removed from me. The past<sup>e</sup> is remote and very deep<sup>f</sup>; 24  
<sup>e</sup> Heb. "what has been." who shall find it out? So I turned myself to 25  
<sup>f</sup> Heb. "deep, deep." ascertain and investigate and seek out a wise explanation and a theory, so as to understand how wickedness is *the result of* ignorance, and madness  
<sup>g</sup> "Woman" and "malignant" do not agree in gender in the Hebrew. <sup>h</sup> Heb. "snares and nets." of folly. And I find woman<sup>g</sup> to be *a cause of it*<sup>g</sup> 26 more malignant than death; for that as to her heart she is as nets<sup>h</sup> and snares, and her hands as bonds, and he who is good in the sight of God, is saved from her, but the sinner is taken captive by her. Lo! this is a reason I found; compila- 27  
<sup>i</sup> i. e. the method of compilation. tion<sup>i</sup> told it *me*; for fact must be laid to fact, to find out a theory. Since what I have long been 28 seeking diligently I have never found: one man out of a thousand I have found; but one woman among all that number I have never found. Be- 29  
<sup>k</sup> Or, "confidence, boldness," arising from a cheerful heart. sides, lo! this is a reason I found; that God made man upright, but they have sought out many de- CHAP. VIII. vices. He who is like a wise man, and understands 1 the true explanation of the thing, the wisdom of that man will enlighten his countenance, and the cheerfulness<sup>k</sup> of his face will be doubled.

## THE ELEVENTH SECTION.

*He inculcates again submission without gainsaying to regal authority, reminding us that for kings there is a time of account, and that if they do not exercise their functions aright, God, to whom alone they are accountable, may punish them in this life with one of his three great plagues. He nevertheless allows it to be a matter of observation, that wicked men are often prosperous and in high authority to the end of their lives, and then buried with distinction, and good men oppressed and despised. And this notice of apparent maladministration in the world, recalls his attention to an argument he had already drawn from it for the existence of a future state, and he proceeds to enlarge upon it. He observes, that the imperfect recompense of the good and bad in this life is made by most men an argument for hardened impiety and voluptuousness; but that in reality, it is for the life to come that the full reward of the good is reserved; and why, he asks, may not some portion of the blessings of the present life be allowed to the wicked? as otherwise there would be no temptation to draw us away from the path of virtue, and consequently no claim to reward in adhering to it. He shews that the contemplation of this life alone can afford no explanation of the ways of God with man; and that we must therefore look at the*

*whole of his dispensations in this world and the next. The good and bad are liable to the same calamities and accidents here; and were it not for the anticipation of a future state, where all will be set right, the condition of man below would be sad indeed. We should then be living here without motive to virtue, and therefore full of impiety and folly, and after that go to the grave, a truly miserable end of a miserable life; for if death be annihilation the most wretched life is preferable to it; so that surely in this case we had best enjoy this life while we have it, and give up our whole minds to the attainment of worldly good, which, however, no human efforts can secure with certainty, since here below everything appears to be disposed of by chance and accident, and men are ignorant what prosperity or adversity may await them. The existence of a future state must therefore, as he has already intimated, be taken into account, in order for a satisfactory explanation of the present life to be obtained.*

---

**I** ADVISE thee to observe the king's word, and 2  
 an elevated person the subject-matter of the oath  
 of God. Be not hasty in going out of his pre- 3  
 sence, nor be engaged<sup>a</sup> in anything wrong; for he  
 can do all he pleases; since the king's word is au- 4  
 thoritative; and who shall say to him, "What  
 doest thou?" He who keeps the commandment<sup>b</sup> 5  
 will appear not to know that the king's word is

<sup>a</sup> Heb. "do not stand,"  
 i. e. "persist."

<sup>b</sup> i. e. "of God."



wrong; but at the same time the mind of the wise man knows that there will be a doom<sup>c</sup> and  
 6 a judgment. For there is a doom<sup>c</sup> and a judgment for every matter; for manifold are the calamities prevalent upon man; for he knows not which may befall him, since who can tell him how  
 7 the future may be? There is no man who has power over the wind, to restrain it; and there is no *exercising* authority over the day of death; and there is no *certain* rescue in war; and restlessness will not save a man *from them*. All this I observed so as to be able to consider aright any case that occurs under the sun when one man rules over another to his injury.

10 But in fact I have seen wicked men to be *honourably* interred, and that they went in and out at the place of the holy man<sup>d</sup>, while those who have done right are forgotten in a city: and  
 11 this was unsatisfactory. Because no speed is made with the execution of the sentence on an evil deed,  
 12 the sons of men are bold<sup>e</sup> to do evil. But supposing that the sinner does evil a hundred times, and God is long-suffering to him; still I know that it will be for the good of those who fear  
 13 God, that they stand in awe of Him: and may not the wicked man be prosperous or have a long life, which is still a mere shadow, because  
 14 he does not fear God? It is an unsatisfactory thing which takes place in the world, that there are just men to whom it happens as if they had done the work of the unjust, and unjust men to whom it happens as if they had done the work

<sup>c</sup> Or, "time of account."

<sup>d</sup> i. e. properly belonging to the holy man.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. "the heart of the sons of men is full."

of the just. I thought that this too was unsatisfactory; and I commended mirth, as that there was no good for man under the sun, but to eat, and drink, and be merry, and that this should continue with him in his employment, during the days of his life which God has assigned him under the sun, while I applied my mind to learn wisdom 15

<sup>f</sup> Heb. "and to contemplate."

in contemplating<sup>f</sup> the vanity of all the business done under the sun even though men give their eyes no sleep by day or night. So I contemplated 17 the whole work of God; for man cannot find out the part of it which is done under the sun, *by itself*; inasmuch as man labours to find it out, and never discovers it, and even if the wise man thinks he understands it, he cannot *really* find it CHAP. IX.

<sup>g</sup> Heb. "I had laid to heart."

out. For I had taken all this into consideration<sup>g</sup>, 1 so as to explain fully how it is that the just and the wise and their works are in the hand of God, and *yet* that men cannot perceive either *his* love or *his* hatred in all they see around them<sup>h</sup>; for 2 that everything happens to each as to all; that the same chance befalls the just and the unjust, the good and pure and the impure, him who sacrifices, and him who does not sacrifice; that the sinner is as the good man, and he who fears an oath, as he who swears; and that this would 3 be a defect in all that takes place under the sun, that the same chance should happen to all, and besides that the minds of the sons of men should be full of evil, and infatuation should possess their minds all their lives, and after that they should go to the dead; for that whosoever is chosen<sup>i</sup>, all 4

<sup>h</sup> Heb. "in all that is in their time."

<sup>i</sup> i. e. "choose whom you will."

people are sure *with respect to him* that “a living  
 5 dog is better off than a dead lion,” because the  
 living know indeed that they must die, but the  
 dead know nothing at all, and so have no longer  
 6 any reward, as though the very memory of them  
 were forgotten; and their love as well as their  
 hatred and their jealousy have come to an end  
 long ago, and they have no longer any profit for  
 7 ever from all that is done under the sun. Go  
 then, *it would follow*, eat thy bread with cheer-  
 fulness, and drink thy wine with a merry heart;  
 for that God has already accepted thy actions:  
 8 let thy garments be always white; and let oil  
 9 never be wanting on thy head: enjoy life with  
 the woman whom thou lovest all the days of thy  
 transitory life<sup>k</sup>, which God hath given thee under  
 the sun, all thy transitory days<sup>k</sup>, for that this is  
 all thy profit from life, and from thy labour which  
 10 thou performest under the sun: do all that thy  
 hand finds in thy power to do, for that there is  
 no action, or speculation, or knowledge, or wisdom,  
 in the grave whither thou art going.

11 I recalled<sup>1</sup> myself to observe that the race is  
 not always won by the swift, or the battle by the  
 mighty, or sustenance by the wise, or wealth by  
 the prudent, or favour by the learned, but that  
 12 destiny and chance befalls all of them; for that  
 man moreover knows not his doom, like fishes  
 which are caught in a fatal net, and like birds  
 caught in a snare, like them the sons of men  
 are snared in a fatal time, when it falls suddenly  
 upon them.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. “life  
 of thy  
 vanity,”  
 “days of  
 thy va-  
 nity.”

<sup>1</sup> Heb. “I  
 returned.”

## THE TWELFTH SECTION.

*Intelligent men, though poor, should be chosen as his ministers by a king. He illustrates this opinion by a tale. The wisest and best minister is he whose caution is always on the alert, and so avoids signal errors. If he sees those in office and high place who are altogether unworthy of it, he will rather acquiesce than try the dangerous experiment of remodeling a government. He depicts this danger in highly metaphorical language. Folly is finally contrasted with wisdom.*

---

THIS instance of wisdom also I have observed <sup>13</sup>  
under the sun, and it has had great influence<sup>a</sup>  
with me. There was a small city, and but few <sup>14</sup>  
men in it; and a great king came against it, and  
besieged it, and built great towers against it; but <sup>15</sup>  
there was found therein a poor but wise man, who  
delivered the city by his wisdom, and yet no one  
had noticed that poor man. So I said to myself, <sup>16</sup>  
Wisdom is better than might; though the wisdom  
of an indigent man is despised, and his words not  
heard. The words of wise men, quietly spoken<sup>b</sup>, <sup>17</sup>  
are better than the clamorous speech of one who  
bears rule<sup>c</sup> among fools. Wisdom is better than <sup>18</sup>  
weapons of war; but one error may spoil much <sup>CHAP. X.</sup>  
good. As dead flies each of them cause the oint-  
ment of the apothecary to effervesce with a foul  
odour<sup>d</sup>, so will a little folly him who is esteemed<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Heb. "and it was great with me."

<sup>b</sup> Literally, "heard in quiet."

<sup>c</sup> i. e. whose harangues sway the minds of fools.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. "causes to stink, causes to effervesce."

<sup>e</sup> Heb. "pre-rious."

2 for wisdom and honour. The mind of a wise man is at his right hand, and the mind of a 3 fool at his left. And even when the fool is walking by the way, his mind fails him, and he proclaims to every one that he is a fool.

4 If the spirit of a ruler be roused against thee, do not lay down thy office, for submission atones 5 for<sup>f</sup> great offences. There is an evil I have seen <sup>f</sup> Heb. "dismisses." under the sun, which *looked* like an oversight 6 proceeding from the ruler; folly was set in many 7 high places, and great men sat in humiliation. I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking like slaves on the ground.

8 He that diggeth a pit may fall into it; and he who digs down a wall, a serpent may bite 9 him. He who cleaves wood may be endangered 10 thereby, if the iron be blunt, and he have not sharpened<sup>g</sup> its edge, and so he *has to* increase *his* <sup>g</sup> Heb. "polished its surfaces." force; but superiority of success belongs to prudence. If the serpent *once* bite, its bite will be 11 without cure<sup>h</sup>, and *then* the babbler<sup>i</sup> will have no <sup>h</sup> Heb. "spell." 12 advantage. The words of a wise man's mouth are <sup>i</sup> Heb. "the owner of a tongue." "Shew favour," but of the lips of a fool, "Destroy

13 him." The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his speech is fatal madness. And the fool is given to much<sup>k</sup> talking; yet 14 no one knows what will be *the consequence of it*; and who can tell him what may be awaiting<sup>l</sup> him? <sup>k</sup> Heb. "will multiply his words." 15 The labour of every fool<sup>m</sup> will weary him out; since he is as though he knew not the way<sup>n</sup> to a city. <sup>l</sup> Heb. "from behind him." <sup>m</sup> Heb. "fools." <sup>n</sup> Heb. "to go."



## THE THIRTEENTH SECTION.

*Solomon compares the misery of a country whose rulers are indolent and luxurious, with the happiness of one where they perform their duties aright. At the same time he warns against slanderous aspersions on those in power.*

---

WOE to thee, O land, if thy king be childish, and 16  
 thy princes feast in the morning. Happy art 17  
 thou, O land, if thy king is noble<sup>a</sup>, and thy princes  
 feast in due season, for strength, and not for drunk-  
 enness. Through indolence the roof of a house will 18  
 fall in, and through remissness of the hands a  
 house will drip through; to the derision of those 19  
 who acquire bread, and wine that cheers life<sup>b</sup>, and  
 money that supplies everything<sup>c</sup>. Blame not a king 20  
 even in thy thought; nor speak lightly of a great  
 man in thy bed-chamber; for the bird of the sky  
 may convey the expression, and the winged fowl  
 may report the thing.

---

<sup>a</sup> Heb.  
 "son of  
 nobles."

<sup>b</sup> Or, "the  
 living,"  
 "people."

<sup>c</sup> Or, "an-  
 swers  
 every pur-  
 pose."

## THE FOURTEENTH SECTION.

*He recommends the active pursuit of merchandize and agriculture, without respect to the prognostics of divination.*

CHAP.  
XI.

- 1 SEND out thy substance<sup>a</sup> upon the waters; for  
in length of time thou wilt find it again.
- 2 Commit shares<sup>b</sup> of it to seven *vessels*, or to eight;  
for thou knowest not what misfortunes may happen
- 3 on the earth. If the clouds are full, they will  
empty their rain on the ground; and if a rod  
falls northward, or southward, in the place where
- 4 the rod falls, there it will lie<sup>c</sup>. One who watches  
the wind may *consequently* not sow, and one who
- 5 observes the clouds reap no harvest. Just as thou  
art ignorant of the course of the wind, as thou  
art of the formations inclosed in the womb of her  
that is with child, so thou knowest not the pur-
- 6 poses<sup>d</sup> of God who appoints all things. In the  
morning sow thy seed, and in the evening lay not  
down thy hand; for thou canst not tell which will  
prosper, this or that, or whether both of them will  
be good alike.

<sup>a</sup> Heb.  
"bread."

<sup>b</sup> Heb. "a  
share."  
i. e. "to  
each of the  
ships."

<sup>c</sup> i. e. "and  
that is all  
you can  
know from  
them."

<sup>d</sup> Heb.  
"pur-  
pose."

## THE FIFTEENTH SECTION.

*Solomon inculcates the duty of cheerfulness in the enjoyment of life, and especially of youth; but of cherishing likewise a recollection that they must quickly end, and that we shall have to give account of our use of them.*

---

THE light also is sweet, and it is pleasant to the 7  
 eyes to see the sun; for if a man live many 8  
 years, he should be cheerful in them all; but he  
 should remember also that the days of darkness to  
 come may be many, and everything that has past  
 fruitless. Be cheerful in thy childhood, O youth; 9  
 and let thy heart rejoice thee in the days of thy  
 youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and  
 after the satisfaction<sup>a</sup> of thine eyes; but be mind-  
 ful also, that God will bring thee to account con-  
 cerning all these things. And remove sorrow from 10  
 thy mind, and dispel pain from thy body, for the <sup>CHAP.</sup>  
 childhood and morning *of life* are transient; but 11 <sup>XII.</sup>  
 remember also thy Creator in the days of thy  
 youth, while as yet the days of evil come not,  
 or the years arrive of which thou wilt say, "I  
 have no pleasure in them;" while as yet the sun, 2  
 and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are  
 not obscured to the sight, or the cloudy humours  
 come afresh after the tears<sup>b</sup>; in the day when the 3  
 guards<sup>c</sup> of the house will tremble, and the men<sup>d</sup>  
 of might will become crooked, and the grinders<sup>e</sup>  
 will cease when they have become few; and those

<sup>a</sup> Heb.  
 "sight."

<sup>b</sup> Heb.  
 "rain."

<sup>c</sup> i. e. "the  
 hands."

<sup>d</sup> i. e. "the  
 thighs."

<sup>e</sup> i. e. "the  
 teeth."

that look out at windows<sup>f</sup> will have become dim,<sup>i. e. "the eyes."</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> and the street-doors will be closed, since the sound of the grinding is low, and one will start up at a bird's note, and all the powers of song will be  
<sup>5</sup> brought low, and they will be afraid of what is high, and the road will be full of alarms, and the almond-tree<sup>g</sup> will bloom, and the grasshopper<sup>h</sup> will  
 become inactive<sup>i</sup>, and appetite will fail, (when a man is going to his eternal home), and the mourn-  
<sup>6</sup> ers<sup>k</sup> will be passing round in the street; while as yet the silver cord is not entangled, or the golden  
 bowl broken, or the pail shattered at the spring,  
<sup>7</sup> or the wheel broken at the well, or the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit to  
<sup>8</sup> God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, said the Preacher, all is vanity.

<sup>g</sup> i. e. "the hoary hair of old age."

<sup>h</sup> i. e. "one most active and nimble."

<sup>i</sup> Literally, "a burden to itself."

<sup>k</sup> i. e. "the precursors of death."

---

### THE SIXTEENTH SECTION.

*Solomon states that much profit may be derived from the perusal of the compositions and compilations of wise and learned men; but more from attention to the practical suggestions of wise counsellors; and that excessive application to books furnishes no adequate reward to the laborious student.*

---

<sup>9</sup> **A**ND the more the Preacher<sup>a</sup> became wise, the more  
 he taught the people knowledge, and listened to it *from others*, and sought it out, and composed<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Or, "Compiler."

<sup>b</sup> Or, "arranged."

many maxims. The Preacher sought to find out 10  
<sup>c</sup> Literally, "written correct-ness of words of truth." pleasing expressions and a correct<sup>c</sup> style in writing words of truth. The words of wise men are 11  
*all* like the points of goads, and *the sayings* of the authors of compilations like nails implanted;  
<sup>d</sup> Literally, "been given forth," i.e. "been produced," or "edited." they might have proceeded<sup>d</sup> from one thinking *mind*. But study more than these, my son, to be 12  
 well advised: making many books is an endless thing; and much useless study a mere weariness of the flesh.

---

#### THE SEVENTEENTH SECTION.

**L**ET us hear the conclusion of the whole sub- 13  
 ject; fear God, and keep His commandments,  
<sup>a</sup> Or, "the duty of every man." for this is the whole *duty*<sup>a</sup> of man; for God will 14  
 bring to account every action with respect to every secret *motive* whether good or evil.

THE END OF ECCLESIASTES.



סֵפֶר שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

הַנִּקְרָא

קֹהֶלֶת

---

LIBER SALOMONIS REGIS

DICTUS

CONCIONATOR.

סֵפֶר שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

הַנִּקְרָא

קֹהֶלֶת

THE FIRST SECTION.

CHAP.  
I.

דְּבָרֵי קֹהֶלֶת בֶּן-דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם : הֵבֵל 1, 2

Ver. 1. "FROM this place to the 12th verse we have a sort " of introduction to this roll ;" (this is one of the five books of the Bible called by the Jews, מִגְּלוֹת, i. e. rolls, because they were always written on a roll of parchment.) " He states in " it the subject of the book, and what he is going to explain " in it.

" The word קֹהֶלֶת is not a proper name, but a noun of " quality, and it must refer to Solomon, for there was no son " of David king in Jerusalem, except Solomon. And he was " called so, because he compiled (Heb. קָהַל) many wise dis- " courses of instruction, and eloquent speeches, or perhaps, be- " cause he was in the habit of delivering his addresses in the " public assembly (קָהַל)." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The Medrash derives this word from קָהַל, to as-  
semble, "שִׁהְיוּ דְּבָרָיו נְאֻמִּים בְּקָהֶל" "because his words were  
spoken in an assembly," as we find in 1 Kings viii. 1, "Then  
Solomon assembled (יָקָהֵל) the elders of Israel, and there were  
assembled (וַיִּקְהֲלוּ) to Solomon all the men of Israel," on which  
occasion he prayed for all the assembly (קָהֶל); and the ren-  
dering accordingly would be "the Preacher," which agrees  
with the Septuagint and the Vulgate. But Grotius and the

## LIBER SALOMONIS REGIS

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CONCIONATOR.

CAP.  
I.

## SECTIO PRIMA.

1 SERMONES Concionatoris (*sive* "Collectoris") Da-  
2 vidis filii, regis in Hierosolyma. Vanissima, inquit

---

Arabic version take it, with Mendlessohn, in the sense of "a collector or compiler of wise sayings." Others, again, derive it from a word of the same sense as the Greek *καλεω*, and render the phrase, "the words of one crying or calling out," like the expression about John the Baptist, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." At any rate it is not a proper name; and its being in the feminine form is not an anomaly, as we have many such forms used as masculines, as Mephibosheth, Mespereth, Lapidoth, &c. I have chosen to render it "Preacher," because this word is more familiar to the ear than such a word as "Compiler," when inserted in the sacred text, and it is uncertain which rendering is the most correct. Still the word קְהִלָּת, when used as a feminine with אֶמְרָה, as it is in a single passage, must be rendered "compilation," and it would therefore be more consistent to render it "Compiler" elsewhere. The passage where it is so used, ch. vii. 27, seems to have inclined Mendlessohn strongly to the latter rendering.

Observe that מִלְּךָ is used with the preposition מִן; we find it afterwards in ver. 9, with the preposition לְ.

Ver. 2. "Every thing which you see on the earth is vain, "void, and empty, so that nothing can be more so; and you must

Concionator, vanissima sunt omnia. Quæ utilitas 3  
 homini *contingit* omni labore suo quo sub sole fun-  
 gitur? Præterit ætas, venit *altera* ætas, dum moles 4

“not imagine that any one thing is an exception; for every  
 “thing is vain, and there is not under the sun any permanent  
 “substance, or real existence.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. הֶבֶל signifies a thing which has no solidity, like the  
 breath which proceeds from a man’s mouth; and the occurrence  
 of the singular number in a state of construction with the plural  
 of the same noun of quality denotes an intensity of that quality,  
 with the sense that nothing can exceed the individual referred  
 to in that respect, as “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” “King of  
 Kings.” The word הֶבֶל has the vowel -i- under its first syllable,  
 because it is in a state of construction. Now the absolute form  
 is never found in Scripture except with six points, (thus, הֶבֶל);  
 and since an instance is not found of a word of six points,  
 (that is, with two segols,) which changes its vowels in construc-  
 tion, it is necessary to conclude that there is besides הֶבֶל  
 another absolute form, הֶבֶל, like אֵבֶל which occurs in construc-  
 tion thus, כְּאֵבֶל אִם, i. e. “Like a mourner of, (or for) his mo-  
 ther.” As for אֵבֶל, it is a verbal adjective from אָבַל, and  
 signifies, “a mourner,” and is not a participle. Very probably  
 the (·) is put under אֵבֶל, where we find a (·) under הֶבֶל on  
 account of the similar vowel under אִם, for the sake of variety.

Ver. 3. “All the diligence of the sons of men, and their  
 “labour and toil, is in vain and fallacious; for every thing  
 “takes place agreeably to a preordained decree which bears  
 “rule in all parts of the world; and as things have been, so  
 “they will be from the beginning to the end; and man labours  
 “to no purpose all the days of his life.” Mendlessohn.

Ver. 4. “He begins with the four elements, and he says

הַבָּלִים אָמַר קִהְלֵת הַבָּל הַבָּלִים הַפֶּל הַבָּל : מֵה-3  
 יִתְרוֹן לָאָדָם בְּכָל-עֲמָלוֹ שִׁיעָמָל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ : דֹּר-4

“ with respect to the earth, (for that is the element called earth),  
 “ that ‘a generation departs’ and comes to an end; for the  
 “ plants and the living creatures and the bodies of men  
 “ return to the earth; and ‘a generation comes’, that is, the  
 “ plants spring up from the ground, and the living creatures  
 “ and the sons of men live on them; and by means of this  
 “ revolution the earth continues always of constant magnitude;  
 “ for all things that perish return again to the dust, and those  
 “ things that are generated afresh are generated from the  
 “ dust.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word דֹּר expresses not merely a generation of men, but of animals, plants, &c. What is here intended, is that the element called earth is going a constant revolution like water, fire, and air, without receiving any addition or diminution in bulk; and that the nourishment derived from the earth, after forming a portion of plants, animals, &c. again returns to the earth, and afterwards goes through the same process time after time. It is remarkable that the Arabic verb نَارَ, evidently cognate with דֹּר, signifies to go about, or move in a circle.

The word הֶלֶךְ is used in Josh. xxiii. 14, and in 1 Kings ii. 2, to express “going the way of all the earth,” i. e. “departing,” as in this place. Observe that the word בֹּא, which here, as usually, means “to come,” is technically used of the setting of the sun, a sense more akin to the ordinary one of הֶלֶךְ. See Gen. xxviii. 11.

The qualification introduced by the insertion of the words “the bulk of,” is necessary for the exhibition of the true sense



# 5 הַלֵּךְ וְרוּר בָּא וְהֶאֱרָץ לְעוֹלָם עֲמֶדֶת: וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ

of the passage, and is an important correction on the usual literal translation, which is apparently quite as inconsistent with the belief of Christians as derived from the New Testament, as the opinion combated by Maimonides, (vid. Prolegomena, p. 18) of the duration of the earth from all eternity, is with that of both Jews and Christians, as derived from the Old Testament. We say "apparently;" for when it is said, "that the earth is to remain for ever," it seems to have been very naturally supposed by Maimonides and others, that what is meant is, that it is to remain for ever in its present state. This, however, we are taught by the New Testament to believe is not to be the case, and we may therefore reasonably infer, that such was not the intention of the sacred writer in the passage before us; nor would such appear to be his meaning, if the above be translated as I have rendered it. Similarly, the other passages which Maimonides quotes from Jeremiah and the Psalms to the same effect (vid. Prolegomena) may be so explained as to appear in perfect accordance with the prophecies of the New Testament. He there misapplies another passage of this book, viz., that in the third chapter, where we read, כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא יְהִיָּה לְעוֹלָם, which unquestionably means, not "all things which God makes are steadfast for ever," but, "all that he appoints," "his appointments," are "fixed for ever"; so that whatever argument he derives from these two passages of Solomon is based on mis-translation. In the other passages there is no mis-translation, but as I have already shewn in the Prolegomena, they may be understood differently from the sense in which he explains them, and yet quite as literally as he is disposed to take them.

Ver. 5. "שׁוֹאֵף is a word signifying haste, and activity. And "the received interpretation of this verse, according to the ar-

5 terræ stat semper eadem. Oritur quoque sol, et occidit sol, et ad locum suum illic, jam oriens, an-

“rangement of the accents, is of this kind. ‘As the sun arises, so he sets, and to the place in which he sets, thither he is already panting to arrive, and darting his beams when he is rising.’ And the order of the words agreeably with the accents will be *וְאֵל-מְקוֹמוֹ שָׁם שׂוֹאֵף זֹרֵחַ הוּא*, as much as to say, that the changes of the sun, (which represents the element fire) are also in recurrence, following in close and necessary connected sequence, his setting, his rising, his setting, and then his rising again; agreeably to the expression which the arrangers of our liturgy have employed, *גִּילָל אֹר מִפְּנֵי חוֹשֶׁךְ וְחוֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אֹר*, i. e. ‘Rolling away light from before darkness, and darkness from before light;’ and at the hour when the sun is rising in the east, he straightway begins to seek, as it were, with eager desire and to dart his beams and shape his course to the place of his setting.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word *מְקוֹמוֹ* has a disjunctive accent of the second class, and *הוּא* a disjunctive accent of the third class, so that *שָׁם* must be taken with *מְקוֹמוֹ*. In chap. iii. 17, *עַתָּה* is in the same way separated from *שָׁם* which is used absolutely; and the construction is very similar to that in this verse; “There is a doom for every work, and every action there.” Mendlessohn therefore renders the passage, “And is already panting for his place there, when he is rising (here);” and so Michaelis couples *הוּא* and *זֹרֵחַ* together, and renders them “Dum exoritur,” or, “quum vix exortus est,” and observes that *שָׁם*, as in verse 7, implies motion to a place, which shews that he does not understand the passage, as Rosenmuller and others do, “And is hastening to his place where he is (next) to arise,” understanding *אֲשֶׁר* with *שָׁם*, so that the order must be

helans properat ; vadens ad austrum, et circumiens ad 6  
 aquilonem ; continuo circumit ventus ; et per cir-  
 cuitus suos redit ventus. Omnia flumina eunt in 7  
 mare, sed mare non redundat : in quem locum eunt

inverted, and stand thus, שְׁמַיָּא אֶל-מְקוֹמוֹ (אֲנִשָּׁר) שָׁם הוּא זֹרֵחַ, where אֲנִשָּׁר שָׁם is rendered “in quo,” “ubi.” I have placed a semicolon at the end of this verse in the translation, and likewise at the end of the clause, “vadens ad austrum et circumiens ad aquilonem,” because, as Mendlessohn shews in his comment on the next verse, this clause may be either spoken of the sun, and joined with verse 5, or of the wind, and joined with the latter clause of 6.

Ver. 6. “He now speaks of the wind, which represents the “element air, and says that it also goes and comes in revolution. “For the wind is nothing but a strong agitation produced in the “atmosphere which surrounds the earth ; and since the atmo- “sphere is a rare and elastic body, this agitation does not con- “fine itself to one spot, but extends from place to place, till “it comes back in the course of its revolution to the place in “which it began ; and thus if the wind goes to the south, it “returns in its circuit to the north. And it is possible that he “may be speaking here of the wind which blows under the “equator, which is well known to sea-faring men, which always “goes the course of the sun ; and in the months of March and “September goes from east to west, and in the summer-time, “tends northward, and in the winter returns to the south.” (When the Hebrews speak of a south wind, a north wind, &c., they mean a wind which blows southward, northward, &c., respectively.) “And in this point of view the expression, “‘Going to the south, and returning to the north,’ applies “both to the sun and to the wind, because they both have “the same course.” Mendlessohn.

וַיָּבֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְאֶל-מְקוֹמוֹ שׁוֹאֵף זֹרֶחַ הוּא שָׁם : הוֹלֵךְ 6  
 אֶל-דָּרוֹם וְסוֹבֵב אֶל-צָפוֹן , סוֹבֵב , סִבֵּב הוֹלֵךְ הָרוֹחַ  
 וְעַל-סִבְיָתָיו שָׁב הָרוֹחַ : כָּל-חֲנָחִילִים הִלְכִים אֶל- 7

NOTE. If the first part of the verse be referred to the sun, it of course relates to his motion in the ecliptic to the north and south of the equator, in consequence of which motion, he is seen in tropical climates at mid-day sometimes at the north and sometimes at the south of the zenith, and between these times in the zenith ; or if it referred to the trade wind, we must recollect that this always blows towards that quarter where the sun is vertical to supply the place of the rarefied air which its greater verticality causes to rise. סִבֵּב סוֹבֵב is nothing more than our phrase, "round and round." The trade-wind cannot be said to go round the compass, because it never blows from west to east ; but, as Mendlessohn says in the first part of his commentary on this verse, the allusion may here be to the freedom of the air, and the meaning be that the disturbance once begun is propagated on and on, till it comes round the world to the same place again. It is remarkable that this passage in all its bearings corresponds with the results of modern science as to the motions and shape of the sun and earth, and the way in which the springs are supplied, &c.

Ver. 7. "All the rivers proceed from their fountains and " springs in the top of the mountains, and pour out their waters " one into another, till at last they all reach the great sea which " encompasses all the world. And such being the case we should " expect that the waters of the sea would be accumulating from " the creation to the end of the world through all generations " which go on multiplying through all time and at every moment ; " but nevertheless we do not see the sea become full over all its " shores, so as to overflow its border and cover the earth; and con-

הֵם וְהֵם אֵינָנו מְלֵא אֶל-מְקוֹם שֶׁהִנָּחִלִים הֵלָכִים  
 שָׁם הֵם שָׁבִים לָלֶכֶת: כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים יִגְעִים לֹא-  
 יוּכַל אִישׁ לְדַבֵּר לֹא-תִשָּׁבַע עֵין לְרֹאוֹת וְלֹא-תִמָּלֵא 8

“sequently the water too must necessarily go round and round,  
 “and return from the sea, (since that is the place he speaks  
 “of them as returning from,) to the sea, (since that is the  
 “place he speaks of them as going to); and this is effected  
 “equally, whether the waters return by subterranean passages  
 “under the mountains to their fountains, or there be conti-  
 “nually rising from the sea to the sky the place of the sun  
 “many vapours and mists which form the greater part of the  
 “clouds, and this vapour turns into rain-water, (on which ac-  
 “count we call the waters of the sea הַקִּוְיָא, ‘the meeting or  
 “collection of waters’), and pours it down, and from this rain-  
 “water the fountains are produced, and by these again the  
 “rivers are supplied, (since all rivers proceed from fountains);  
 “for as to the waters of the sea being bitter, and rain-water  
 “sweet, the fact is that the vapour when it ascends leaves  
 “the heavy particles of salt behind, and only takes up the  
 “sweet particles of water on account of their lightness. It  
 “is clear then, that all things in nature, viz. the four  
 “elements, fire, air, earth, and water, are always moving in  
 “a circle, and shifting through all time and at every moment,  
 “so that they are never left one instant in the same condition,  
 “but go the round of all those changes, till they return to  
 “the place where they were at the beginning of their motion,  
 “i. e. to the place they came from.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Michaelis and Rosenmuller both agree with Mendlessohn in rendering אֶל-מְקוֹם שֶׁהִנָּחִלִים הֵלָכִים, “ad locum quo flumina eunt,” though some take it to mean, “unde exeunt.” Rosenmuller joins שָׁם to this clause, neglecting the



8 flumina, illuc eadem iterum sunt itura. Cunctæ res motu laborant; nemo id satis potest enarrare: sicut oculus visu non potest satiari, neque expleri potest

accent zakeph gadol. It properly goes with הֵם שָׁבִים לָלֶכֶת i. e. "illuc revertuntur eundo," "thither they go again;" for the participle in such constructions is used adverbially as in Psalm cxxvii. 2, מִשְׁבִּימֵי קוֹם, "mane surgentes," literally, "matutinantés surgere." And again, מֵאַחֲרֵי שָׁבַת, "tarde," i. e. "sero sedentes," literally, "tardantes sedere;" also Psalm cxiii. 5, מִגְבִּיהִי לָשָׁבַת, "superne sedens," literally, "supernans sedere," (where the ם is merely a poetical affix), so also chap. v. 14, יָשׁוּב לָלֶכֶת, "he will go again;" וַיֹּסֶף, "to add," is used in the same way, as וַתֹּסֶף לָלֶכֶת, "and she brought forth again."

Mendlessohn seems inclined to understand מָ before שָׁם in this place, as he says, יָשׁוּבוּ מִן הַיָּם שָׁם הֵם שָׁבִים לָלֶכֶת, and would render it, "the place where the rivers go to, thence they return again." But, beside the anomaly of supplying or understanding מָ where it makes the difference of sense between "thither," and "thence," the other rendering expresses the revolution of the watery element much more fully. Luther observes that Aristotle has discussed much the origin of springs and rivers, without throwing much light on the subject; whereas Solomon has given the only true explanation of it.

Ver. 8. "All things seem as if wearied and exhausted by their constant labour and work, since they never rest or cease a single moment in their destined task, but always go on changing in a circle, as we have described; so that it is impossible for a mortal man to describe and explain it all by utterance of the lips. And not only the elements which we have mentioned, but the spirit of mankind is also in the

auris auditu. Quod fuit, idem futurum est; et quod 9  
factum est, idem fiet; nec quidquam sub sole novum  
est. Si forte sit aliquid de quo dicat homo, 'En 10  
hoc novum est!' jamdudum extitit priscis tempo-

"same state, and his senses are as though they never ceased  
"from fatigue. For the eye is never satisfied with seeing,  
"and it is always in great desire to see what it hitherto has  
"not seen, as is known by experience. And just so the ear  
"is always listening, as though it was thirsting to hear, and  
"was never satisfied so as to say, 'Enough.' And consequently  
"the senses also of the sons of men are always at work with-  
"out cessation, and changing at every moment." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Some commentators have rendered נִיָּעִים: "weary-  
ing," "wearisome" in a transitive sense; but had this been  
intended it would doubtless have been put in the Pihel con-  
jugation. Hurwitz renders it, "All things are in a state of  
activity, so that man cannot describe it all." The meaning  
is, "Man cannot enumerate all the instances of constant motion  
and revolution of created things, just as the eye and ear of  
man cannot satisfy themselves with, or exhaust the objects of  
sight and hearing, but are incessantly employed." The abrupt-  
ness with which the latter half of the verse is introduced, shews  
that it must be a comparison, or simile; that "just as the eye  
and ear are never satisfied, so a man will never come to the  
end of speaking, if he try to enumerate all the instances of  
this sort." This is much more natural than to suppose that  
Solomon meant to speak of the eye and ear as particular in-  
stances of this unwearied activity, immediately after stating that  
the instances of it are so numerous, that it would be useless to  
attempt to enumerate them. Mendlessohn however appears to  
understand the passage in this latter sense. The accents allow

אֵין מִשְׁמַע : מִה־שָּׁהִיּהּ הוּא שִׁיְהִיָּהּ וּמִה־שֶׁנֶּעֱשֶׂה 9  
 הוּא שִׁיעֲשֶׂה וְאֵין כָּל־חֲדָשׁ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ : יֵשׁ דָּבָר 10  
 שִׁיאֵמַר רְאֵה־זֶה חֲדָשׁ הוּא בָּבָר הִיא לְעֹלָמִים אֲשֶׁר

us to render it thus, "All things that are toiling, one cannot describe," or "How all things are toiling, one cannot describe;" but probably in this case כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים would have been preceded by אֵת.

Ver. 9. "Now since all things are going round and round, "it necessarily follows, that what has been in past time, will take "place also in future time; and that what has been done will "be done, so that there is nothing new under the sun; for that "all things return to what they have been, and from thence "proceed in a circuit, as though they moved along a circular "line which returns into itself. For all created things are "toiling either to exhibit a particular substantial form, and to "superimpose it on the works of God, or gradually to efface "such form, until it have disappeared; at least, all their ope- "rations relate to form and shape, the separating what is "united, and the uniting what is separated, the setting in "motion what is in rest, and the setting at rest what is in "motion; and consequently there is nothing new under the "sun." Mendlessohn.

Ver. 10. "And if there be sometimes a thing of which the "sons of men say, See this! it is new; you must not attend "to what they say, for it has already happened in past time, "before we came into the world." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. We have here לְ before עֹלָמִים. It is often put before words of time, and then means "in," or "at;" vid. Prov. vii. 20; Job xxi. 30; Jon. iv. 7. Observe that עֹלָמִים is here treated as if it were in the singular number, and is the antecedent to הִיא. מִלִּפְנֵינוּ signifies "before us," "out of" or

11 הָיָה מִלְּפָנֵינוּ : אֵין זְכוֹן לְרָאשִׁים וְגַם לְאַחֲרָיִם  
שִׁיְהִי לֹא־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם זְכוֹן עִם שִׁיְהִי לְאַחֲרָנָה :

“before our time,” just as לְפָנֵינוּ would mean “in our time,” vid. Eccles. ii. 9; iv. 16. Thus in Ps. lxxii. 6, we have לְפָנֵי יָרֵחַ, “in the moon’s time,” i. e. as long as it lasts; לְפָנֵי being synonymous in this phrase with עִם in that immediately preceding it, viz. עִם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, i. e. “in the time of the sun’s existence,” “while the sun endures,” just as in ver. 11, עִם שִׁיְהִי, means “in the time of those who shall be hereafter.” לְפָנֵים however always means “formerly,” “before that time,” not “at that time,” vid. Deut. ii. 10; Ruth iv. 7; and לְפָנֵי sometimes signifies “before,” in point of time, as in Amos i. 1, “two years לְפָנֵי הָרָעָשׁ i. e. before the earthquake,” and in Eccles. i. 16, לְפָנֵי is “before my time.”

Ver. 11. “But in length of time the former times are forgotten; therefore, they say vainly of this thing, that it is new; “and so also the things which shall be in future times will have “no remembrance in the times which shall come after them, “and with the sons of men who shall be hereafter. Thus far “Solomon’s words are a sort of introduction. Now he begins “to explain in detail, about all the things that suggest themselves to the mind of man, that they are vanity and emptiness; “and the conclusion of all the investigations and all the “reflections and discussions, after you have heard the “objections and the answers to them, the argument and the “opposing argument, behold, this is the whole of man, to fear “God and to keep his commandments, as the wise man states “at the end of the roll.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 11 expresses the reason why some things are falsely supposed to be new, viz. man’s forgetfulness of the past.

If we understand יָמִים with רָאשִׁים, &c. we may also understand it before שִׁיְהִי. If we understand דְּבָרִים, we must supply אֲנָשִׁים, or יָמִים, before the second שִׁיְהִי.

11 ribus quæ ante nos fuerunt. Nulla est priorum memoria; nec erit posterorum quæ futura sunt ulla memoria apud eos qui postea futuri sunt.

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It has been objected against the maxim, "There is nothing new under the sun," that "the miraculous conception," was "a new thing," and that God says, "Behold, I make a new thing," &c.; "I make new heavens and a new earth;" and again, "I make all things new." But it is to be remembered, that Solomon here speaks of human affairs alone, and is merely stating that like the elements in their changes, human labour can produce nothing new, but must follow in a track already trod, so that the anxiety and toil of man are fruitless.

Observe that זָכָרוֹן in the beginning of verse 11, is the construct form of זָכָרוֹן, which occurs in the same verse afterwards, though Buxtorf, deceived apparently by the לְ which follows, seems to have taken זָכָרוֹן also in his lexicon as an absolute form. The לְ before רֵאשִׁימִים is merely a sign of the genitive case, as we have in Dan. i. 1, בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמַלְכוּת, "In the third year of the reign of, &c." where שָׁנַת is the construct form of שָׁנָה, "a year." In the same way we have afterwards at verse 9, מְלִיךְ לְשָׂדֶה, "owner of a field," to which Mendlesohn quotes as a parallel passage, מְלִיךְ לְמוֹאָב, "king of Moab." Again, in the headings of the Psalms, we have מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד, "a Psalm of David," מְזִמּוֹר לְאַסָּף, "a Psalm of Asaph," and sometimes there is an ellipsis of מְזִמּוֹר, as in the heading of Ps. lxxii. לְשִׁלֹּמֹה, i. e. "a Psalm of Solomon," that Psalm being a Prayer of Solomon for himself, that God would endue him with wisdom, and a prophecy of the blessings which would thereby accrue to his people and kingdom.

For the sense of עִם שִׁיחֵי, see the note on the last verse.

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## SECTIO SECUNDA.

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Ego Concionator (*sive* “Collector”) rex fui super 12 Israel in Hierosolyma. Et applicui mentem meam 13 ad disquirendum et investigandum philosophice quæcunque sub cœlo faciuntur; hæc est molesta occupatio quam Deus dedit hominibus, ut sese in eâ

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Ver. 12. “ ‘I the Compiler was a king,’ i. e. one who has “ the power and authority to do according to his pleasure; and “ ‘I was king over Israel,’ i. e. a wise people, and in the city “ Jerusalem, that nurse of wise men.” Mendlessohn.

Ver. 13. “The word תִּנְּוֹר signifies ‘to investigate and make “ research,’ as in the passage below, תִּנְּוֹרִי בְּלִבִּי. At first, he “ says, I applied myself to examine philosophically and to in- “ vestigate the condition of created things which are made under “ the heaven. For investigation is attractive to the sons of “ men, and men think now that investigation is the true and “ the real happiness of the intelligent man, and the substantial “ good, the final perfection of all that is good and desirable; “ as though man who is ‘born of woman and full of trouble’ “ could find rest and tranquillity by means of human investiga- “ tion; but in reality this is not the case, but it is a sad em- “ ployment. Now it is true, he says, that God has implanted “ the inclination in the heart of the sons of men to investigate “ and examine philosophically all that is done under the sun, “ so that they are always longing to know what they do not “ know, and to understand and comprehend what is concealed “ from them; but it is also true that it was the purpose of

## THE SECOND SECTION.

אֲנִי קִהַּלֹת הָיִיתִי מִלֶּךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּירוּשָׁלַם : 12  
 וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־לִבִּי לָדְרוֹשׁ וּלְתוֹר בַּחֲקֻמָּה עַל כָּל־אִשָּׁר 13  
 נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא וְעֵינַי רָע נָתַן אֱלֹהִים

“ God, that man should not find perfect tranquillity in the midst  
 “ of philosophy and examination into the productions of nature ;  
 “ for investigation alone does not make the investigator happy.”  
 Mendlessohn.

NOTE. *בַּחֲקֻמָּה* is equivalent to an adverb, and signifies  
 “scientifically,” “by the method of philosophy.”

The simple form of the word *עֵינַי*, when taken absolutely, is spelt with a (׃), as in the passage *רָאִיתִי אֶת הָעֵינַי*, and here it is necessarily pointed with a pathack (־), because it is in a state of construction with the word *רָע*, which comes after it. Mendlessohn makes the *עֵינַי* refer to the practice of philosophic investigation; but this is somewhat forced. It refers more naturally to the “works done under the sun,” of which he pronounces the futility in the next verse, in order to explain his having said that it is a sad employment that God has given to the sons of men; for it is to be recollected, that all his reflections through this and the next chapter are of a gloomy and discontented kind, while in ch. iii. he speaks in a different strain. “The sons of men” is a general expression for the human race, whereas philosophic investigations are pursued by very few. However I have

14 לְבִנֵי הָאָדָם לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ : רָאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-הַמַּעֲשִׂים  
 שֶׁנַּעֲשׂוּ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ וְהִנֵּה הַכֹּל הֶבֶל וּרְעוֹת רִיחַ :  
 15 מַעֲוָה לֹא-יֻכָּל לְתַקֵּן וְחֶסְרוֹן לֹא-יֻכָּל לְהַמְנוֹת :

preserved the ambiguity in the translation. Vide viii. 16, where עֲנֵן is used precisely in the same sense as in this passage.

It is clear that the words עָנָה and עֲנֵן are closely akin in sense, and that the first means “to be busy,” “to bestow labour on anything,” the second, “the business in which one is engaged,” and these words do not here imply distress or suffering

עַל expresses the object of research.

He here states that his research did not relate to God, or the angels, or anything celestial, but simply to terrestrial and human affairs, and to these only his conclusion refers, that “it is a sad employment,” literally, “an occupation of evil.”

Ver. 14, 15. “He says, After I had seen and considered “all that has been done under the sun, I found that the reflections of the sons of men were reflections of vanity, and ideas “of wind, which cannot profit, and cannot make happy. And “what profit has a man in all his diligence and labour? Behold, if there be anything perverted or depraved in his condition, it cannot be set right, and if there be anything “defective in it, it cannot be supplied; for it is impossible “for him to change his destiny; and, consequently, it is in “vain that he devises so many plans for attaining happiness.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Verse 15 must be joined with 14, because verse 15 is included under the word הִנֵּה, which expresses the result of his contemplations. Instead of retaining the Hebraism, “Behold,” the passage may be rendered, “Comperique omnia ceu halitum esse aut ventosam imaginationem, perversum non posse corrigi neque defectum suppleri.”

14 occupent. Contemplatus sum omnia negotia quæ  
sub sole fiunt; et en! omnia ceu halitus erant, aut  
15 ventosa imaginatio; non poterat perversum corrigi,

The word רְעִית is of the form דְּמוּת, "likeness." This is the form of verbal nouns derived from verbs which have a quiescent ה for the third radical. It is always in the singular number. Its meaning is cognate with that of the verb רָעָה in the passage אִפְרַיִם רוֹעֶה רוּחַ, "Ephraim has ideas of wind," Hosca xii. 2. i. e. "His ideas are unsubstantial, like the wind;" or in the expression, Ps. xxxvii. 3, רָעָה אֱמוּנָה, "Think truth," or "Imagine ideas of truth;" for in both these cases the verb may either express "to think," or "have ideas," as it does in Chaldee, or else, "to feed on," "pascere," as it more ordinarily does in Hebrew; in which latter case it would be metaphorically used of the intelligent soul, because "thought is as it were the food of the soul, in which it luxuriates and enjoys itself," as the Rabbinic commentator says; and the rendering of רְעִית רוּחַ and also of רְעִיוֹן רוּחַ would be "ventosum studium." Mendlessohn inclines to the former rendering, "a windy notion," "a fleeting and unsubstantial idea." The rendering of רְעִית, "vexation," is entirely without foundation, as רָעָה in Chaldee is the same as the Hebrew רָצָה, "voluit," which would give quite a different and opposite sense, viz. "pursuit," "object of desire," "studium," as above, and hence the Septuagint renders it προαίρεσις πνεύματος. הַבֶּל means literally, as we have observed, "a breath proceeding from the mouth," and is frequently used metaphorically in this book along with רְעִית רוּחַ, and both together may be rendered, "like a mere breath and windy notion."

The substantive חֶסְרוֹן is of the form אֲבִיּוֹן. Some have

neque suppleri poterat defectus ! Loquebar equidem 16  
mecum, dicens, “En ! auxi et propagavi philoso-  
phiam plusquam omnes qui ante me præfuerunt  
Hierosolymæ, et mens mea multam habuit philoso-  
phiæ scientiæque cognitionem !” Itaque mentem 17  
adhibui meam, quum ad cognitorem philosophiæ  
tum ad cognitionem vesaniæ et stultitiæ ; comperi

rendered the latter clause of verse 15, “The defects could not be numbered;” but we should then have had **הַסְרֹן** in the plural number, and the parallelism, so necessary in Hebrew, would not be equally well kept up.

**לְהַמְנוֹת** must signify here, as in Isaiah liii. 12, “To be reckoned with,” and “in addition to.” Now what is wanting cannot be reckoned along with what is present, unless it be “supplied;” but when anything wanting is supplied, it can then be reckoned along with the rest of its class, which before it could not be.

Ver. 16. “Then I said to myself, Behold, I have increased “philosophy by two methods of increase, viz. extension, and “propagation. For of the philosopher who by his genius invents “a new subject of philosophy, it would be said, that ‘he has “extended the limits of philosophy;’ and of him who teaches “philosophy to others, that ‘he has propagated it;’ and he “says, ‘I have extended and propagated’ philosophy above “all who were before me in Jerusalem.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. As Jerom observes, Solomon only says he was wiser than his predecessors in Jerusalem, not than Moses, Abraham, and the Patriarchs.

**הַרְבֵּה** is in fact the infinitive Hiphil of **רָבָה**, but is used as an adjective, and, as the Rabbinic commentator observes, is a noun adjective ending in **ה** and with a (·) under the last



דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲנִי עִם-לְבִי לֵאמֹר אֲנִי הִנֵּה הִגַּדְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי 16  
 חֲכָמָה עַל כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה לִפְנֵי עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם וּלְבִי  
 רָאָה הַרְבֵּה חֲכָמָה וְדָעַת: וְאַתָּנָה לְבִי לָדַעַת חֲכָמָה 17  
 וְדָעַת הַלָּלוֹת וְשִׁבְּלוֹת יִדְעֵתִי שְׁגִם-זֶה הוּא רַעיוֹן

syllable, and which consequently cannot receive a plural termination. In the same way we find הֵיטֵב often used, as in Deut. ix. 21, adjectively, to express intensiveness, though it is really the infinitive mood Hiphil of יָטַב, "to be good." So also in Prov. xxvii. 14, we find הַשְׁכֵּם, "mane surgere," for "mane." The two forms of the infinitive Hiphil of רָבָה are הַרְבֵּה and הַרְבֹּת, which are therefore also the two forms of the verbal adjective, and the latter is not the plural of the former. For the word הַרְבֵּה is also used as a plural (as being a noun of multitude), as in the passage in this book, כִּי הַרְבֵּה יָדָיו.

It is remarkable that we have here, as in the verses i. 10, ii. 7, the verb הָיָה in the singular number, where the antecedent is plural; we can only say that the class is taken collectively. On the contrary, in ii. 7, we have כָּל נְשָׁאָיו, and not כָּל נְשָׁהָיו.

Ver. 17. "And now when I came to apply myself to ascertain the difference between philosophy, and madness and folly, I found that that too was a mere windy notion, for that in the superiority of philosophy there is not any real prosperity nor happiness for man." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The literal interpretation of this passage according to the accents is, "To understand philosophy *on the one hand*, and to understand madness and folly *on the other*," that is,

18 רוּחַ : כִּי בָרַב הִכְמָה רַב־כָּעַם וְיוֹסִיף הָעֵת יוֹסִיף  
מִכְאוֹב :

“to ascertain their relative merits,” or, as I have rendered it, “to compare them.” הוֹלִלוֹת is rendered by the Rabbinic commentators, “The being bereft of understanding,” and “consequent departure from the way of wisdom.” We find respecting the word שְׁכָלוֹת the following remark in the Masora, that “every word denoting folly” is written with a ס, except one, which is written with a ש in the passage וְדַעַת הוֹלִלוֹת וְשְׁכָלוֹת. We have several times, in the book of Job, the word כָּעַשׂ, in the same sense in which כָּעַם is elsewhere used, which is an anomaly of the same description.

Ver. 18. “For the more a man pursues philosophic research, the more is his vexation and trouble increased, since “either from the small extent of his knowledge and his proneness to error he is disgusted with life at seeing that all his “labour and all his trouble in philosophy and science do not “bring him to his object, for that truth is deep, so that who “shall find it out? or on account of the inconsistencies which “he sees in the world, (hidden from the eyes of all living are “the ways of Providence, in the accidents which happen to the “sons of men both to the just and the unjust; so that many “men of consummate ability have discussed this subject, and “it is also noticed ever and anon all through this roll), or on “account of the envy of others who hate and persecute causelessly the philosophic person; and the fool is safe from most “of those annoyances, which may be on account of his little “sensibility, as our wise men have said, ‘The fool feels nothing,’ אין שׁוֹמֵה מְרִגֵּשׁ, or because he is not so exposed to “accidents and chances, according to their saying, ‘Accidents

18 hanc quoque ventosam esse imaginationem. Nam in multa philosophia multum est tædium; et qui auget scientiam auget quoque dolorem.

“happen not to the fool,” אין שוטה נפגע. And there is enough “in all this to shew the intelligent person that he will not find “real prosperity in human investigation.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Just as בל becomes בל before a Makeph, רב becomes רב, as רב-כעס.

וְיוֹסִיף דַּעַת. We must understand הָאֲשֶׁר before יוֹסִיף. A similar abruptness of construction is found in vi. 12, where הָאֲשֶׁר must be understood before בָּצֵל, and in Prov. xii. 17, יִפְיֶה אֱמוּנָה, “He who utters truth shews forth righteousness,” and elsewhere in that book; and Psal. cxxvi. 6, הָלוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וְגִבָּה, “He that goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, &c.” but which I prefer to translate, as well as the latter part of the Psalm, as a prayer for the restoration of Israel, “He that goes forth (as it were) weeping and bearing a basket of seed, as surely as he now does so, so surely let him come back again with joy, &c.” (Aben Ezra renders מִשְׁבַּע הָהָרַע, “a basket of seed.”) The Psalm begins thus, “When the Lord brings back the captivity of Zion, then shall we be as in a dream (of delight). Then will our mouth be filled with laughter, &c.” Then will they say among the heathen, “The Lord hath done great things for these.” Then shall we be exultingly shouting, “The Lord hath done great things for us;” and then the prayer begins, “Bring back our captivity, O Lord, &c.” The Biblical version makes the Psalmist pray for the fulfilment of that event immediately after speaking of it as having already taken place.

## SECTIO TERTIA.

CAP.  
II.

Dixi mecum, "Age quæso, tentabo te per voluptatem," et "fruere jucunditate;" sed ecce! hæc quoque vana erat! De risu dixi, "Vesanus est,"<sup>2</sup> et de hilaritate, "Quid hæc facit?"

Ver. 1. "After I saw that in philosophy there was no prosperity nor happiness for man, I said, I will cease from the pursuit of philosophy, and constantly employ myself in merriment; and I said to myself, Come now, I will try thee whether thou canst find real good and happiness in mirth, drinking, and luxury. Behold, this too was in vain. There was not in luxury true happiness or felicity desirable for man; but if man proceeds to a great degree in making merry and enjoying luxury and constant mirth, in the end he will be disgusted with his life, and his mind will loathe merriment.

"נָא לָכֶּה is an expression for exhorting to activity and readiness for action; and because motion in walking is a state of activity, and sitting still one of inactivity, he expresses the former by a word of motion יֵלֵךְ." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. נָא means quæso, "I pray." The Targum renders it by כְּעַן, "now," and Aben Ezra at Gen. xii. 11, says, מֵלֶּה נָא כְּמוֹ עַתָּה, i. e. verbum נָא idem valet quod, "nunc."

Yarchi derives אֶנְסַכָּה from נִסַּךְ, to pour out, and renders it, "I will pour out wine with joy;" and so the Vulgate translates it, "affluam deliciis." But Solomon seems rather to mean that he intended to give up his mind to pleasurable sensations.

## THE THIRD SECTION.

CHAP.  
II.

אִמְרָתִי אֲנִי בְּלִפְי לְכֵה-נָא אֲנַסְכָּה בְּשִׂמְחָה וְרָאָה 1  
 בְּטוֹב וְהִנֵּה גַם-הוּא הָבֵל : לְשִׁחּוֹק אִמְרָתִי מְהוֹלֵל 2  
 וּלְשִׂמְחָה מֵ-זֶה עֲשֵׂה :

The **כָּה** at the end of **אֲנַסְכָּה** is the pronominal affix for the second person feminine, and the root is **נָסַה**.

The construction of **נָסַה** with **בְּ** occurs also in 1 Kings x. 1, where the queen of the south is said to have tried Solomon with riddles, **בְּחִידוֹת**.

**רָאָה** with **בְּ** denotes not merely sight and observation of the substantive after **בְּ**, but full enjoyment of it. Thus we find Ps. xxvii. 13, "Unless I had trusted to enjoy the goodness of the Lord (**לִרְאוֹת בְּטוֹב יי**) in the land of the living." Psalm xxxiv. 13, "One who is desirous to enjoy good in his life-time," **אוֹהֵב יָמִים לִרְאוֹת בְּטוֹב**. Ps. cxxviii. 5, "Enjoy the happiness of Jerusalem," **רְאֵה בְּטוֹב יְרוּשָׁלַם** &c.

Ver. 2. "And then he says of laughter, that it is an employment void of understanding; and of mirth he says, 'What doeth it?' 'What good does it bring man? It does not make him happy or wise.' **מְהוֹלֵל** means here 'infatuated.' " Mendlessohn.

NOTE. **מְהוֹלֵל** is the participle **Pohal**. The active of this verb, i. e. the **Pohel** is used in Ch. vii. 7, **יְהוֹלֵל**, "it drives mad." This word therefore means, "driven mad," "infatuated." We find it in this sense in Psalm cii. 9, **מְהוֹלְלֵי בִי נִשְׁבָּעוּ**, "Those



## THE FOURTH SECTION.

3 תַּרְתִּי בְלִבִּי לַמְשׁוֹךְ בֵּינִי אֶת-בְּשָׂרִי וּלְבִי נִהַג  
 בַּחֲכָמָה וּלְאִחֹי בְּסִכְלוֹת עַד, אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה אִי-זֶה טוֹב  
 לִבִּנִי הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם מִסֶּפֶר יָמָי

who are mad against me (מְהוֹלְלִי) have sworn against me," i. e. "conspired against me." Dathe renders the word "magnum splendorem habes," according to the sense which it bears in several passages of the Psalms, where it signifies high excellence and dignity, and is applied to Jehovah. And in this sense the Rabbins took it in this place likewise, and were obliged to have recourse to a somewhat far-fetched interpretation, as Mendlessohn relates in his preface (see p. 78). Another reading of this passage is מַה הוֹעִיל, "What doth it profit?" which the authors of the Syriac version seem to have followed.

Observe that זֶה is in the feminine gender instead of זֶה, and its antecedent is שְׂמָחָה. So in ix. 13, we find זֶה חֲכָמָה "This piece of wisdom." Also עֹשָׂה is the feminine participle.

The expression used here of mirth מֶה-זֶה עֹשָׂה may mean, "What doth it profit?" "what good does it do?" or it may be merely a phrase of checking and reprimanding, as in the expression, "Who shall stay his hand? or say to him, What doest thou?" (מַה תַּעֲשֶׂה), which occurs in this book, at viii. 4, and in Dan. iv. 33.

## SECTIO QUARTA.

3 Scrutatus sum mecum quomodo corpus meum vino foverem, et, mente mea philosophiam excolente, ineptiam simul retinerem, usque dum viderem quidnam bonum esset hominibus quod sub cœlo facerent

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Ver. 3. "When I saw that wisdom by itself only increases vexation, and merriment by itself does not make happy, I sought a method of effecting a union between them; to cherish and indulge my body with wine, (for 'wine cheers people'), and while my mind was training itself in philosophy at the same time to retain the enjoyments of folly, that is, the lusts of the world; according to the doubtful conduct of a man who knows not where to find tranquillity and rest for himself; and he says, 'I retained both this and that, till I might see what is the good acceptable and desirable for man.'" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. מִשָּׂדֶה is "to indulge and train at the same time," i. e. to cherish. The Arabic صسك is "continere;" and from this word is derived صسكَة, "food which renders the frame robust."

נִדְגַּ is a transitive verb; and עצמו ("itself") is to be understood after it, as the Rabbinic commentators say, so that לְבִי is a nominative absolute, "my mind training or practising itself in philosophy."

אֵי is a particle, which when placed before pronouns or adverbs gives them an interrogative signification; and אֵי-נִדְגַּ means simply "what."

in numero dierum vitæ suæ. Magnifica mihi opera 4  
 feci, ædificavi mihi ædes, plantavi mihi vineas. Hor- 5  
 tos mihi feci, et paradisos, et consevi in eis arbores  
 fructuosas omnigenas. Feci mihi stagna aquarum, 6  
 ex quibus irrigandum nemus producens arbores. Emi 7  
 servos et ancillas; habuique vernas. Item armenti  
 et pecoris greges mihi erant majores quam cuique  
 eorum qui apud me erant Hierosolymæ; congressi 8  
 quoque mihi argentum et aurum, regumque et pro-  
 vinciarum thesauros; comparavi mihi cantatores et  
 cantatrices, deliciasque hominum, plurimas captivas  
 mulieres. Et magnus factus sum, et plura acquisivi 9  
 quam ullus eorum qui apud me erant Hierosoly-  
 mæ; insuper sapientia mea mihi adjuvabat (*vel as-*

Ver. 5. גִּנּוֹת is from the root גָּנַן, “to shelter,” on account of the trees in a garden which shelter with their branches him who sits under their shade.

פָּרָדִיס is a quadriliteral, evidently cognate with the Greek παραδεισος, signifying a pleasant garden formed into regular parterres.

Ver. 6. יַעַר צֹמֶה עֵצִים means what we call in English a “nursery ground.”

Ver. 7. בְּנֵי-בֵית is a phrase used collectively in Gen. xiv. 14, and xv. 2, for “slaves born in the family,” “a household.” Large and small cattle are both called מִקְנֶה, because they are the main part of human wealth.

I am inclined to think that in this verse and in 9, לְפָנַי does not mean “before my time,” but “in my time.” See note on chap. i. 10. So לְפָנֵיהֶם in iv. 16, means, “in their time,” or, “apud eos,” i. e. “around them, and under their observation.” Accordingly I have rendered it in the Latin version,

חִיִּיהֶם : הִגְדַּלְתִּי מַעֲשֵׂי בְנֵיתִי לִי בָתִּים נִטַּעְתִּי 4  
 לִי בָרָמִים : עָשִׂיתִי לִי גִנּוֹת וּפְרָדִים וְנִטַּעְתִּי 5  
 בָּהֶם עֵץ כָּל-פֶּרִי : עָשִׂיתִי לִי בִּרְכוֹת מַיִם לְהַשְׁקוֹת 6  
 מֵהֶם יָעַר צֹמֶחַ עֵצִים : קָנִיתִי עֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחוֹת 7  
 וּבְנֵי-בֵית הָיָה לִי גַם מִקְנֶה בָקָר וְצֹאן הֲרִיבָה הָיָה  
 לִי מְכָל שֶׁהָיוּ לִפְנֵי בִירוֹשָׁלָם : בָּנִסְתִּי לִי גַם- 8  
 בֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וּסְגָלַת מַלְכִּים וְהַמְדִּינוֹת עָשִׂיתִי לִי  
 שָׂרִים וְשָׂרוֹת וְתַעֲנֻגּוֹת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם שָׂדֶה וְשָׂדוֹת :  
 וְגִדַּלְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי מְכָל שֶׁהָיָה לִפְנֵי בִירוֹשָׁלָם אֲף 9

“apud me,” supposing Solomon to mean that he was the most opulent man of his own day, while in the English I have preserved the translation, “before me,” i. e. “before my time,” which the word על before יְרוּשָׁלַם compels us to adopt in i. 16.

Ver. 8. “סְגָלָה” is a thing much in request, and precious, “kept in a treasury, to take pride and delight in, and which is “only found in particular provinces.” Mendlessohn.

שְׂדָה וְשָׂדוֹת probably means “captive women taken in war,” as it were שְׂדוּדוֹת; and this construction expresses “several,” not an individual woman; like רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָתַיִם, Judges v. 30, “puella et duæ puellæ,” “several females;” שְׂדָה being derived from שָׂדַר.

Ver. 9. הוֹסַפְתִּי. Either we must understand some such word as עָשָׂר after this verb, and translate, “I acquired more than all, &c.” “I became more opulent than, &c.” or, if it be taken intransitively, we must render it, “I exceeded all, &c.”

10 חֲכָמָתִי עֲמָדָה לִי : וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלוּ עֵינַי לֹא אָצְלָתִי  
 מֵהֶם לֹא־מָנַעְתִּי אֶת־לִבִּי מִכָּל־שִׂמְחָה כִּי־לִבִּי שָׂמַח  
 11 מִכָּל־עֲמָלִי וְזֶה־הָיָה חֲלָקִי מִכָּל־עֲמָלִי : וּפָנִיתִי אֲנִי  
 בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂי שִׁעְשֻׁעֵי יָדַי וּבְעֵמָל שֶׁעֲמַלְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת וְהִנֵּה  
 הֶפֶל הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רֹחַ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ :

Mendlessohn observes that the expression לִי עֲמָדָה means, "It was an assistance to me, to help me to do works which had not been done before me in Jerusalem." It may be well rendered into English, "stood me in good stead."

Ver. 10. "I withheld not myself from any enjoyment, for "man has no advantage from all the labour which he performs, "except a merry heart, and why should I refrain myself from "mirth?" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. שִׂמְחָה is an adjective.

The word חֲלָק constantly means "the profit or advantage derived from any particular method of pursuing happiness;" in this passage חֲלָקִי means "my profit," "the profit I had in view in all my labour." Thus we find it used in Eccles. iii. 21, "For that is his profit," i. e. "cheerfulness is the only profit he can derive from his employment." So also v. 18, a similar passage to the last. See also Psalm xvi. 5, and Psalm xvii. 14, "Who have their only profit in this life."

Ver. 11. "Behold, after I had done all these works, I turned "to consider them again, to see whether man can find happiness "and prosperity in them; and, behold, all were as a mere breath "and windy notion, since in all these there is no real and substantial good under the sun." Mendlessohn.



10 tabat). Ac nihil eorum quæ oculi mei appetebant iis  
 denegavi; non cohibui animum meum ab ulla læti-  
 tia; animus enim meus lætatus est de omne labore  
 meo, et hic erat fructus meus, quem ex omni la-  
 11 bore meo expectabam. At intuebar in omnia quæ  
 manus meæ opera fecerant, et in laborem quo in  
 peragendo versatus eram; et ecce! omnia ceu hali-  
 tus erant, aut ventosa imaginatio, nec quicquam erat  
 sub sole fructuosum.

NOTE. פָּנִיתִי בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂי, the same construction occurs be-  
 tween שָׁעָה and בְּ. Vide at Exod. v. 9, וְאַל יִשְׁעוּ בְּדִבְרֵי שָׁקֶר, “and let them not look at (regard) vain words.” We find the  
 verb פָּנָה in the sense “to look,” in Exod. ii. 12, וַיִּפֶּן כֹּה וְכֹה, “And he looked this way and that, and saw  
 that there was no one” (near). Is. viii. 22, וַיִּפְּנֶה לְמַעְלָה, “And looked upwards.” We may therefore either render the above  
 words as I have done in the English Version, “But I turned to  
 all the works,” or as in the Latin Version, “Intuebar in omnia  
 opera, &c.” “I looked at all the works,” or, “I looked among  
 all the works,” i. e. to find satisfaction.

Solomon had now exhausted all the means of earthly enjoy-  
 ment, without deriving substantial satisfaction from any of them.  
 After this he continued for a while, as we perceive from the fol-  
 lowing section, in a desponding and querulous frame of mind,  
 until the contemplation of the overruling providence of God  
 convinced him that all our affairs are ordered by Him for the  
 best, and that our highest wisdom consists in cheerful submission  
 to His will in the performance of our respective duties. Vid.  
 Chap. III. and Sect. VI.

## SECTIO QUINTA.

Itaque convertēbam me a consideranda sapientia 12  
cum vesania et stultitia; quid enim faciet alter qui  
post regem ad eandem contemplationem accedet? Id  
quod dudum fecerunt (*i. e.* factum erit). Equidem 13  
videbam tantam esse philosophiæ præ stultitia excel-  
lentiam, quanta luci sit præ tenebris excellentia. Sa- 14  
piens habet oculos suos in capite, sed stultus pergit  
in tenebris; sed tamen ego intellexi quoque eundem

---

Ver. 12. "As much as to say, 'I turned back from looking  
"any longer for prosperity and happiness in all the works of  
"madness and folly, though they be done scientifically; for there  
"is no good in them; and say not "Perhaps a greater philo-  
"sopher than you would do them in such a way as to make him-  
"self happy." For what should a man do or try who comes  
"after a king? What others have already done.' The meaning  
"of which is, that he cannot invent anything new which those  
"anterior to him in time have not done." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn understands ׀ before לְרֵאוֹת, or else  
renders, "I turned away (in despair) at the contemplation, &c.  
as nothing was to be derived from it of any value." We must  
understand ׀ again in the last verse of Chapter vii. after לְבַד.

The expression "what they have already done," is equi-  
valent to "what has been done already."

Ver. 13. "He is now returning to discuss a great and  
"important question in the matter of philosophy and folly; and  
"that is, that with respect to reflection and intelligence, every  
"intelligent person must allow that there is a great difference

## THE FIFTH SECTION.

12 וּפָנִיתִי אֲנִי לִרְאוֹת חֲכָמָה וְהוֹלָלוֹת וְסִבִּלוֹת בִּי  
 מֵהָאָדָם שְׂבִיבָא אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-כָּבֵר  
 13 עָשׂוּהוּ : וְרָאִיתִי אֲנִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ יִתְרוֹן לַחֲכָמָה מִן-הַסִּבִּלוֹת  
 14 בִּיתְרוֹן הָאֹר מִן-הַחֲשָׁךְ : הַחֲכָם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ  
 וְהַפֶּסֶל בַּחֲשָׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ וַיִּדְעֵתִי גַם-אֲנִי שֶׁמִּקְרָה אַחֵר

“ between wisdom and folly, and that the superiority of wisdom  
 “ is as clear as the sun, so that no objector can possibly deny  
 “ it; (for the wise man sees good and evil, what is straight  
 “ and what crooked, and chooses by means of his intelligence  
 “ the good and right way, but the fool knows not how to  
 “ take heed and beware; ‘ he knows not at what he stumbles;’  
 “ and consequently the superiority of wisdom is clear and ma-  
 “ nifest of itself;) and yet that in liability to accidents there is  
 “ no difference between them; and sometimes the wise man falls  
 “ into a snare and the fool escapes, but generally the same  
 “ accidents happen to both of them. He now proceeds to  
 “ illustrate this difficulty in the following verses by means of  
 “ a review and examination of the actions of men and the  
 “ accidents that befall them.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. בִּיתְרוֹן is written for בִּיתְרוֹן; for the letter י has  
 become quiescent, and the vowel been taken up by the servile  
 letter כ.

Ver. 14, 15. “ ‘ The wise man’s eyes are in his head,’ i. e.  
 “ he understands in the beginning of any business what it will

15 יָקָרָה אֶת-בָּלָם : וְאַמְרָתִי אֲנִי בְלִפְי כְּמִקְרָה הַפְּסִיל  
 גַּם-אֲנִי יִקְרָנִי וְלִמָּה חֲכָמָתִי אֲנִי אִזּו יִתֵּר וְדַבְּרָתִי  
 16 בְלִפְי שְׁגִם-זֶה הָבֵל : כִּי אֵין זִכְרוֹן לַחֲכָמִים עִם-  
 הַפְּסִיל לְעוֹלָם בְּשִׁכְבָּר הַיָּמִים הַבָּאִים הַכֹּל נִשְׁכָּח  
 17 וְאֵיךְ יָמוּת הַחֲכָמִים עִם-הַפְּסִיל : וְשִׁנְאַתִּי אֶת-הַחַיִּים  
 כִּי רָע עָלִי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שֶׁנַּעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ כִּי-הַכֹּל

“ turn out in its end ; but the fool walks as it were in the dark,  
 “ so that he cannot take heed against a snare ; and nevertheless  
 “ I found that the same accidents may happen to both of them ;  
 “ so I said to myself that this too (viz. the superiority which  
 “ wisdom has over folly) is also vanity.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 15. For other examples of אֲנִי used absolutely, vid. Note to viii. 2, infra. Compare הַחֲכָמִים in ver 14.

Ver. 16. “ If you should say that it is an advantage be-  
 “ longing to the wise man that he will be in remembrance for  
 “ ever, and that he will make himself a name in the world  
 “ as the great men of their nations and their kings have  
 “ thought to do, who have waged great wars and formidable,  
 “ and have done notable deeds in the world in order that their  
 “ remembrance might be left to future generations ; behold, this  
 “ too is a vain idea. The wise man as well as the fool has no  
 “ everlasting remembrance, but it lasts only for a little time  
 “ and not many days ; for in coming ages all will be forgotten,  
 “ and if this do not happen in the very next generation, it will  
 “ happen in a generation more remote, and at all events their  
 “ remembrance will not remain to the end. Alas ! how perishes  
 “ the memory of the wise man with that of the fool ! and both  
 “ of them are as if they had never been.” Mendlessohn.

15 utrisque casum contingere posse. Itaque dixi mecum,  
 “Secundum stulti casum, quod ad me attinet, mihi  
 quoque casus contingere potest, et quid igitur pro-  
 dest quod sapientia præcellam?” quamobrem dixi  
 16 mecum hoc quoque vanum esse. Sapientis æque ac  
 stulti nulla est sempiterna memoria, quandoquidem  
 diebus venturis uterque dudum oblivioni datus fue-  
 17 rit; et quomodo moritur sapiens stulti ritu! Itaque  
 exosus eram vitam, nam displicebat mihi opus quod sub

NOTE. אֵין זְכוֹרֹן לְחָכָם, “He has no remembrance,” i. e. “is not remembered;” זְכוֹרֹן is in construction, and לְ only the sign of the genitive case. Vid. ch. i. 11. עִם here expresses “equally with,” “like,” in which sense we find it in Ps. lxxiii. 25, וְעִמָּךְ לֹא הִפְצֵתִי בָאָרֶץ, “And there is none upon earth that I desire equally with thee.” And in Job ix. 26, הִלְפּוּ עִם אֲנִיּוֹת, “They are past away like ships.”

בְּשֵׁנִים הוּא, as in Gen. vi. 3, בְּשֵׁנִים בָּשָׂר, “Inasmuch as also he is flesh.” We find בְּאִשֶּׁר in the sense “inasmuch as,” at Eccl. vii. 2, “Inasmuch as that is the end of every man.”

Before הַיָּמִים הַבָּאִים understand בְּ, as in 1 Sam. ii. 31, and Jer. vii. 32. So we had in Eccl. ii. 3, מְסַפֵּר יָמִים, for בְּמְסַפֵּר יָמִים. נִשְׁכַּח means, “will have been forgotten.”

הַכֹּל signifies here, as in many other places in this book, “both of them.” Rosenmuller agrees with my version of this passage; he renders it “eo quod jam-pridem diebus venientibus uterque oblivioni tradetur,” or “traditus fuerit.”

Ver. 17. “Behold, this difficulty brings man to hate his  
 “life in this world when he sees that he has no profit in all his  
 “labour, for that all is a mere breath and windy notion in this  
 “world.



sole fit, quippe quod cunctum ceu halitus esset, aut ventosa imaginatio. Exosus quoque eram cunctum 18 laborem meum quem sub sole elaboraveram, quippe quem relicturus sim homini qui mihi superstes fuerit, 19 (et quis scit sapiensne sit futurus an stultus?) et potitus erit cuncto labore meo quem tanto labore ac sapientia sub sole perfecерim; quæ res quoque irrita esset, (i. e. quæ hujus vitæ imperfectio esset.) Et conver- 20 tebam me ad desperare faciendum animum meum de omni labore quem sub sole elaboraveram. Est 21 enim cujus labor sapienter et scienter et optimo cum

Ver. 18. "Here is the second objection against the excellence and superiority of wisdom; 'Behold, I may labour and "perform great works like a mighty king who possesses the "power to do so, and to-morrow I may be dead and leave my "kingdom to some one who may succeed me; and who knows "whether he will be a wise man or a fool?"' Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word מְעַלְמִי is a verbal adjective from מַלַּךְ.

Ver. 19. "'And be that as it may, he will be master of all "my work which my labour and wisdom have effected under "the sun.' Here may possibly be allusion to the bad promise "of his son Rehoboam." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The expression, "Who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool?" must be regarded as in a parenthesis. Where he says, "shall be master of all my labour," he means "the fruits of my labour which my perseverance and skill have enabled me to acquire."

Ver. 20. "So I turned myself to the resolution not to "exercise any more forethought or anxiety about all my works, "but to take a disgust to them, for that there was no profit or "ground for confidence in them." Mendlessohn.

הָבֵל וּרְעוֹת רֹחַ : וְשָׁנֵאתִי אֲנִי אֶת-כָּל-עֲמָלִי שְׂאֵנִי 18  
 עֲמָל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁאֲנִיָּהֲנוּ לָאָדָם שִׁיְהִי אַחֲרַי :  
 וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ הַחֲכָם יִהְיֶה אֹו סָכָל וַיִּשְׁלַט בְּכָל-עֲמָלִי 19  
 שֶׁעֲמַלְתִּי וְשֶׁחֲכַמְתִּי תַחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ גַּם-זֶה הָבֵל :  
 וּסְבוֹתִי אֲנִי לִיאֵשׁ אֶת-לִבִּי עַל כָּל-הָעֲמָל שֶׁעֲמַלְתִּי 20  
 תַחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ : כִּי-יֵשׁ אָדָם שֶׁעֲמָלוֹ בַּחֲכָמָה וּבִדְרֹעַת 21

NOTE. סְבוֹתִי is an intransitive verb, signifying, "I came round," "I turned."

שְׂאֵשׁ is a verb in the Pahel conjugation, and consequently transitive; and the passage may be rendered, "I came to make myself despair." The Rabbins used יָאֵשׁ to express "despair of recollecting anything."

Ver. 21. "Here is another objection still stronger than "that which precedes it, and this is that even if a man think "with himself, 'What have I to do with those that come after "me? I will labour and enjoy myself in my lifetime, and not "be anxious about what may happen after my death;' behold, "even this enjoyment depends on a decree pre-ordained by "God, and not on the efforts or choice of man. And sometimes "one man labours philosophically and scientifically and suc- "cessfully, and another enjoys the fruit of it, as if the one "were made only to heap up and accumulate wealth, and the "other only to eat and make merry with what he has not "laboured for; and this is a great evil." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word חֲלָקוֹ is inserted to explain what is

וּבְנִשְׁרוֹן וּלְאָדָם שֶׁלֹא עָמַל-בּוֹ יִתְּנֵנוּ חֶלְקוֹ גַּם-זֶה  
 22 הַבֵּל וְרָעָה רַבָּה : פִּי מֶה-הוּא לְאָדָם בְּכָל-עֲמָלוֹ  
 23 וּבִרְעִיוֹן לְבּוֹ שֶׁהוּא עָמַל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ : פִּי כָל-יָמָיו  
 מִכְּאֲבִים וְכָעַם עֲנִיָּו גַּם-בְּלֵילָה לֹא-שָׁכַב לְבּוֹ גַּם-  
 24 זֶה הַבֵּל הוּא : אֵין-טוֹב בָּאָדָם שִׁיאֲכַל וְשָׁתָה  
 וְהִרְאָה אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ טוֹב בַּעֲמָלוֹ גַּם-זֶה רָאִיתִי אֲנִי

meant by leaving one's "labour" to another, that it is leaving "the fruit of it" to others.

The expression גַּם-זֶה הַבֵּל וְרָעָה רַבָּה may be either rendered as referring to the man's labour, which he goes on to describe in the next verse as unremitting by day or night, and yet in most cases profitable only to his heir; or it may be taken to refer in general to the circumstance mentioned in the first part of the verse, that men often toil only for their heirs, and *רָעָה רַבָּה* to mean "a widely prevailing evil;" and the next verse would express the frequency of such cases. I have adopted the latter sense in the translation. *רב* most generally denotes magnitude of number, but sometimes also of degree or intensity.

Ver. 22, 23. "Our Rabbins of blessed memory have employed *הוּא* as a word expressing habit and custom. Thus "they say, 'the thing usually (*בְּהוּוֹה*) written;' and so we "may interpret it here. He speaks as one asking a question, "For what is the practice of the sons of men with respect to "all their labour, &c.?" and he answers it for himself, 'That "all his days are wearisome, and his employment vexatious, so "that even in the night his mind sleeps not for thinking about

successu perfectus est, sed qui homini, qui non in eo laboraverit concedere eum, nempe fructum suum, debet; et hoc quoque res irrita, (i. e. vitæ imper-  
 22 fectione), et magnum malum est. Quænam enim est consuetudo hominis in omni ejus labore et mentis ejus cogitatione, in quibus sese occupat sub sole?  
 23 quod cuncti ejus dies sunt fatigantes, et occupatio ejus molestia, adeo ut ne noctu quidem animus ejus  
 24 quiescat, *licet* hoc quoque vanum sit. Non est eximie bonum homini quod comedat et bibat et in labore suo sibimet ipsi voluptatem præstet; sed hoc

“his business; and though this too is vain and foolish on the  
 “part of those who so labour, nevertheless the practice of man  
 “is even so; and how then should it not be a great evil to  
 “him for another to enter into the fruits of his labour?”  
 Mendlessohn.

Ver. 24. “Behold, it is no such great good or happiness  
 “for man that the only profit he derives from his labour should  
 “be eating and drinking and enjoying himself, but even this  
 “amount of good is not at the disposal of man, but comes from  
 “God.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Rosenmuller would understand the passage אֵין טוֹב בְּיָדָיו, “Non est bonum penes hominem,” i. e. “His eating and drinking, and enjoying himself in his labour, is not a good in the power or at the disposal of man.” This agrees very well with the following clause, “Even this I perceived to be from the hand of God alone,” but it is unnecessary to adopt this forced rendering of אֵין טוֹב, for בְּ טוֹב always means “good for.” Mendlessohn’s interpretation gives the same general sense without introducing this anomaly.

etiam comperi divinitus dari; (quis enim comedere 25  
aut quis voluptatem sentire poterit, si ego non  
potuerim?) sed homini qui ipsi placet dare Deum 26  
sapientiam et scientiam et lætitiā, et improbo  
dare opus colligendi et coacervandi quæ mox hic  
tradat ei qui Deo placet. Hoc quoque irritum ceu  
halitus erat et ventosa cogitatio.

Ver. 25. “חַיֵּשׁ signifies, ‘to be in haste or activity,’ or  
“else, as probably here, ‘to enjoy with the senses.’ ‘For if  
“it came from the hand of man to have mirth and enjoy-  
“ment in his occupation, surely I should have enjoyed myself  
“more than all men, for there was no one to prevent me from  
“doing what I pleased.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. חַיֵּשׁ בְּמִנִּי. It is absurd to render this, “beside  
me.” It means rather, “without me,” or, “exclusively of me.”  
“Who shall enjoy, if I could not?” like the Chaldee, בְּרִי מִי.

Ver. 26. “‘But I find by experience that God gives to  
“the man who is good in his sight wisdom and knowledge  
“and enjoyment even without his labouring or toiling for it,  
“and to the sinner he assigns the employment of laying up  
“and amassing to give it them who are good in the sight of  
“God; and truly this idea is a vain reflection and windy notion,  
“for no one can see the difference between these two men,  
“why one should be good in the sight of God, and the other  
“be accounted a sinner. Therefore I turned to another theory,  
“that perhaps every thing happens by a pre-ordained decree,’  
“as he explains in what immediately follows.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Verses 24, 25, 26, are a somewhat difficult pas-  
sage. Solomon has been describing his own repinings and  
despondency on account of the fatal and unforeseen disasters to  
which the wise and foolish are alike liable, and by which labour  
and forethought may be frustrated in an instant. In verse 23,



25 בִּי מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הִיא : בִּי מִי יֵאָכֵל וּמִי יִחְוֶשׁ  
 26 חוּץ מִמֶּנִּי : בִּי לְאָדָם שְׂטוֹב לְפָנָיו נָתַן חֲכָמָה  
 וְרַעַת וְשִׁמְחָה וְלַחֹטֵא נָתַן עֲנָן לְאַסָּף וְלִכְנֹס לְתֵת  
 לְטוֹב לְפָנָי הָאֱלֹהִים גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרַעוּת רוּחַ :

he says that in fact the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour cannot be secured by man, but is a gift of God alone to those on whom He chooses to bestow it, (as otherwise, ver. 25, he himself would have attained perfect happiness if any one could). This reflection leads him in verse 26 to suggest as an explanation of the apparently fortuitous condition of mankind, that since profit from labour is a gift of God, it must be the good man that He enables and inspires with the desire to use what his toil has acquired for the advantage of himself and others, and the bad man that he impels to be always accumulating what he will not enjoy himself but leave to him who is good in God's sight, which (as the last clause "גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וכו'" might be rendered) is an unsatisfactory task ; but Mendlessohn ingeniously makes this clause refer to the explanation itself, and considers Solomon to be declaring it to be unsatisfactory and insufficient, as unsatisfactory as the fortuitous state of things which it was intended to explain ; for that since we are still ignorant whom God foreknows to be good or a sinner and regards as such, it may still be said to be a matter of chance to which class each of us belongs, nor is the uncertainty of our condition at all diminished by this view of it. In the next Section Solomon clears up the difficulty more successfully by shewing that there is no such thing as chance, that we are responsible creatures, that God has pre-ordained all events for our greatest final good, and that it is therefore our duty to be cheerful and content.

## THE SIXTH SECTION.

CHAP.  
III.

1, 2 לְכֹל זְמַן וְעֵת לְכָל-חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם : עֵת  
 לְלֶדֶת וְעֵת לָמוּת עֵת לְטַעַת וְעֵת לַעֲקֹר נָטוּעַ :  
 3 עֵת לְהָרוֹג וְעֵת לְרַפֹּא עֵת לִפְרוֹץ וְעֵת לִבְנוֹת :  
 4, 5 עֵת לִבְבוֹת וְעֵת לְשָׁחוֹק עֵת סִפּוֹר וְעֵת רִקּוֹד : עֵת  
 לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעֵת פָּנוּס אֲבָנִים עֵת לַחֲבֹק וְעֵת  
 6 לְרַחֵק מִחֶבֶק : עֵת לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעֵת לְאַבֵּד עֵת לְשָׁמֹר

Ver. 1. "He now proceeds to explain, by means of trial  
 "and examination, that all things happen according to a pre-  
 "ordained decree determined by God; and that consequently  
 "for every thing there is its particular time and fixed season,  
 "and that it is not in the power of man to defer or accelerate  
 "this season in its approach." Mendlessohn.

Ver. 2. "He speaks of the beginning and end of man, as  
 "fixed seasons, and says that there are such fixed seasons not only  
 "for man, but also for things sown and planted." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Perhaps לָדֶת may be taken substantively for  
 "birth," and the sense be "tempus partûs," scilicet "nativi-  
 tatis." The antithesis is thus better kept up than by trans-  
 lating it "bringing forth." טַעַת is another form of the in-  
 finitive of נָטַע, beside נָטוּעַ, as if from יָטַע.

Ver. 3. "A time to kill and a time to heal." He does

## SECTIO SEXTA.

CAP.  
III.

1 Sua cuique rei occasio est et tempus certum  
 2 omni negotio sub cœlo. Tempus nascendi (*vel* pa-  
 riendi), et tempus moriendi; tempus plantandi, et  
 3 tempus plantata exstirpandi. Tempus interficiendi,  
 et tempus sanandi; tempus destruendi, et tempus  
 4 ædificandi. Tempus est plorandi, et tempus riden-  
 di; tempus est lugendi, et tempus saltandi. Tempus  
 est disjiciendi lapides, et tempus colligendi lapides;  
 tempus amplexandi, et tempus ab amplexu absti-  
 6 nendi. Tempus est quærendi, et tempus perdendi;

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“not say, ‘a time to make alive;’ for there is no fixed time for  
 “that in the course of this world. His meaning here has re-  
 “ference to scientific operations, that these too have fixed times.  
 “For sometimes the skilful physician labours philosophically and  
 “scientifically and correctly to cure a patient and avails not,  
 “but well nigh does him more harm than good; whereas some-  
 “times when a physician altogether incompetent to his work  
 “proceeds foolishly and chooses for the patient a plan which  
 “is strange and quite foreign from the methods of science, the  
 “patient is nevertheless cured, merely because the time to cure  
 “has come.” Mendlesohn.

Ver. 4—8. “A time for a man to resign himself of his  
 “own accord to weeping, and ‘a time to laugh,’ when he is  
 “ready to laugh at anything, and so also ‘a time to lament,’  
 “and ‘a time to dance.’ ‘A time to cast away’; even an accident

tempus servandi, et tempus abjiciendi. Tempus est 7  
 dissuendi, et tempus consuendi; tempus tacendi, et  
 tempus loquendi. Tempus est amandi, et tempus 8  
 odio habendi; tempus belli, et tempus pacis. Quid 9  
 ergo *rem aliquam* agenti prodest quod *in eâ* laboret?  
 Contemplatus sum occupationem quam dedit Deus 10  
 hominibus ut in ea occupentur. Omnem eam fecit 11

“has its own appointed season, just as there is a time ‘to throw  
 “away useless stones,’ and ‘a time to build up those which were  
 “thrown away’. ‘A time to embrace;’ even the sexual desire  
 “implanted in the human heart has its own particular season,  
 “for a man to embrace the wife of his bosom, and ‘to abstain  
 “from embracing her.’

“(5) Stones are thrown away when a field or vineyard is  
 “cleared. On the other hand they are collected in order to  
 “repair houses, strew roads, or inclose fields.

“Here, as in verse (6), he speaks of what frequently hap-  
 “pens in life, that at one time we squander or reject what at  
 “another time we carefully collect or amass.

“In (6) he goes on to illustrate this matter in detail from  
 “the passions and thoughts of men, their love and hatred,  
 “their reposing and their rising; for all these take place at  
 “fixed times, the diligent man cannot hasten them, and the in-  
 “dolent man cannot defer them.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 7. The word קְרוֹעַ probably refers to the  
 rending of the garments in times of mourning.

Ver. 9. “‘And all this being the case, what advantage has  
 “the active man in the thing wherein he labours’, or, ‘in that  
 “he labours? since his diligence is in vain’.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The literal rendering of this verse would be, “Quid  
 emolumentum est agentis in eo quod laboriose agit?”

וְעַת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ : עַת לְקַרֹּעַ וְעַת לְתַפּוֹר עַת לַחֲשׂוֹת 7  
 וְעַת לְרַבֵּר : עַת לְאַהֲבַּ וְעַת לְשָׂנֵא עַת מְלַחֲמָה 8  
 וְעַת שָׁלוֹם : מֵה־יִּתְרוֹן הָעוֹשֶׂה בְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא עֹמֵל : 9  
 רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָעֲנָן אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לְבִנְיָ הָאָרֶם 10  
 לְעֵנּוֹת בּוֹ : אֶת־הַכֹּל עָשָׂה יָפָה בְּעֵתוֹ גַּם אֶת־ 11

Ver. 10, 11. “מֵשֶׁרֶת *יָפָה* has the accent *מֵשֶׁרֶת*, a conjunctive  
 “accent of the second class, so that it is to be connected with the  
 “following word *בְּעֵתוֹ*. The meaning is, that at a time fixed  
 “for a thing that thing will be good and excellent, and that all  
 “that God appoints is excellent in its season, even death and  
 “sickness, poverty and distress, famine and war, which are all evil  
 “in our eyes who are short-sighted and cannot possibly attain  
 “to the comprehension of the proportion of all things to their  
 “time and place; but if it were possible for man to comprehend  
 “all the works of God from the least to the greatest with all  
 “the proportions of time and place, he surely would know with  
 “certainty that nothing evil ever comes down from heaven, but  
 “that God has appointed every thing so as to be excellent in  
 “its own season.

*גַּם נָתַן*. “Behold, God hath implanted in the human heart  
 “the love of the world, i. e. of this present life, so that one  
 “should labour and another study philosophy, one should  
 “amass wealth and another build houses and another plant  
 “vineyards, one should love and another hate, &c.; and with  
 “all this labour and energy, this toil and diligence in the busi-  
 “ness of the world they are never exempt from the decrees  
 “of providence, and only do the will of God and his previous  
 “pleasure; and this is the case even though they think and  
 “imagine in their hearts that they are doing their own pleasure,



הָעֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִפְנֵי מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמָּצֵא הָאָדָם  
אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים מִרְאֵשׁ וְעַד־סוֹף :

“and not that of God. Behold! he says, in the end it is impossible but that they should find the employment of which God has decreed that it should be theirs from beginning to end. And the meaning of מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמָּצֵא is exactly the same as that of שְׁבֻדָּאי יִמָּצֵא, ‘that he must certainly find;’ for if he had said מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר יִמָּצֵא, it would have been a negative proposition; and therefore, since he says, מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמָּצֵא, it must be a positive proposition, as though he had said, ‘so that it is impossible that he should not find.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The interpretation of this passage must depend entirely on the sense given to אֶת־הָעוֹלָם. The Rabbinic commentators coincide in rendering this “the world,” i. e. the “love of the world,” or “of this present life,” such being the most common use of this word in the Talmud, and one which agrees very well with this particular verse as well as the general sense of the passage. Now it has been objected unfairly that the word עוֹלָם is not elsewhere used in Scripture except to express a long period of time definite or indefinite, and that therefore it cannot have a different sense here. This is true with regard to the use of the word עוֹלָם, but it is also true that this is the only passage in which we find this word in the singular number used absolutely, and with the definite article הָ. Every where else it is either in a state of construction with another noun, as בְּרִית עוֹלָם, “an everlasting covenant,” or it is united with a preposition, as לְעוֹלָם; or it is used adverbially, as in the phrase, עוֹלָם וְעַד, as also sometimes without וְעַד, but I believe this is the only passage where עוֹלָם is used abso-

eximiam esse in suo quamque tempore; atque indidit etiam eorum animis hujus ævi amorem, quominus non opus illud sibi quisque inveniat quod

lutely and with עולם, either in the subjective or objective case, throughout the Old Testament, so that there is no evidence that when so used, it ever bore the sense of eternal or even definite time, and its sense in the present instance must be inferred from the connexion of the passage and from analogy or authority, as is the case with all ἀπαξ λεγόμενα, and not from use elsewhere. Now as to analogy, we find עולמים in several passages always in the sense of “ages,” “long periods of time,” and that accordingly “αιῶνες” is always used in this sense in the New Testament. “αιῶν” on the contrary is constantly used there for “the world,” “this present life;” which must have arisen from the use of עולם in this sense among the later Jews, and is an additional evidence to that of the Talmud that it was so used; and surely with respect to a book of the date of Ecclesiastes the ascertaining of this use must be of great importance towards establishing the true sense of the word. As far as authority goes, I have all the Rabbins on my side in adopting the above sense. If it be objected that I do not render it “the world,” but the “love of the world,” this objection applies equally to the other interpretation of the passage, which is, “Et æternitatis sensum, (not ‘æternitatem,’) indidit eorum animis, non tamen ut perveniant illi ad universi operis divini a principio usque ad finem intelligentiam.” It is perfectly true that “though we have some vague ‘perception of eternity,’ we cannot comprehend the whole of the Divine purposes in the government of the world,” and that this remark harmonizes very well with the rest of the sense of the passage, which sets forth the propriety of cheerful and contented acquiescal in the Divine appointments, over which man

ei statuerit Deus ab initio usque ad finem. Com- 12  
 peri igitur nihil esse iis bonum nisi lætari et bene  
 agere in vitâ suâ, et præterea, quod aliquis come- 13  
 dat bibatque videatque bonum fructum omnis  
 laboris sui, id Dei munus esse. Comperi quicquid 14  
 statuit Deus id fore semper fixum; neminem ei  
 addere et neminem detrahare posse; et ita Deum

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cannot possibly have any controul, but which He has appointed immutably from all eternity, even to the minutest details of human life, in order that man might fear before Him, i. e. that they might trust in Him, and not in themselves; but a serious objection to this sense of the verse, however good and consistent with the passage, is the entire neglect on this interpretation of the important monosyllable לֹא, which cannot be silenced as in Greek, by saying that two negatives do not make an affirmative, (vide Mendlessohn's comment.) Hurwitz indeed says, "Two negatives are not equivalent to an affirmative;" but this notion he has derived from the passages, Exod. xiv. 11, and 2 Kings i. 16, in both which the expression הֲמֵלֵךְ אֵין is used to express, "are there (or, were there) none at all?" and is spoken with vehemence and indignation, which sufficiently accounts for the repetition of the negative, as we should have in Latin, "Nulline prorsus erant?" Buxtorf evidently regards the double negative in those two passages as an anomaly, and says, the אֵין is pleonastic. Mendlessohn's explanation avoids this error, and is perfectly consistent with the general sense. בִּלְ and בְּלִי are simple negatives like לֹא and אֵל, expressing both "non" and "ne." עַד בְּלִי יָרֵחַ in Ps. lxxii. means "Till there be no moon," i. e. "as long as the moon lasts."

12 יִדְעֵתִי כִּי אֵין טוֹב בָּם כִּי אִם-לְשִׁמּוֹחַ וּלְעִשׂוֹת  
 13 טוֹב בְּחַיָּיו : וְגַם כָּל-הָאָדָם שִׂיאֲכֹל וְשִׂתָּה וְרָאָה  
 14 טוֹב בְּכָל-עֲמָלוֹ מִמֶּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא : יִדְעֵתִי כִּי כָל-  
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא יִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם עָלָיו אֵין  
 לְהוֹסִיף וּמִמֶּנּוּ אֵין לִגְרוֹעַ וְהָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂה שְׂיִרָאָה

מִרָאשׁ וְעַד סוֹף is somewhat ambiguous. Agreeably with the accents it cannot mean, "which God has pre-ordained from the beginning to the end of time," but either that "from the beginning of the world to the end of it man will always find exactly the employment appointed him by God," or that "man performs from first to last, (that is, 'throughout,') precisely the employment which God has pre-ordained that he should, while he thinks he is following his own inclination."

Ver. 12—14. "Since then this matter is true, and well established, behold I have now ascertained that both the remarks which I have made above are true, and that they are not contradictory one to another. I found that it is the happiness of man to be cheerful, and to do good in his life-time; and I also found that this happiness is not entirely committed to the disposal of man, but that it is from the gift of God, since I had seen that the small part which depends on the movements and actions of men is overruled by the divine decree; for as to all that God appoints He has decreed with regard to it that so it must be, so that none can add to it, and none diminish from it. And if so, it is certain that cheerfulness and happiness in employment is not committed to man's disposal, but that this also comes from the hand of God, and He has appointed and willed that no creature should be able to

# 15 מִלְפָּנָיו : מֵה־נִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה בְּבָר הוּא וְאִשֶּׁר לִהְיוֹת בְּבָר

“add to His appointment or diminish from it, in order that “none might trust in their own doings, but fear before Him.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 12. Here we have again the phrase, טוֹב בְּ, in the sense of “good for.” Aben Ezra renders לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹב, “jucunde vivere,” “animæ suæ bonum ostendere,” “indulgere genio,” but it properly means, as in the rest of Scripture, (vide Psalm xxxiv. 15, xxxvii. 27) “to do right,” “to depart from evil.” So also in (13), רָאָה טוֹב means, “sees good done or effected,” i. e. to himself and others by means of his labour.

The ׀ before נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, and also before רָאָה, are of course converse after the future יֵאָכֵל.

In (14) כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֱלֹהִים refers not to created things, as Maimonides takes it in his Moreh Nevochim, which do not continue immutable, but to the appointments of God in human affairs. עָשָׂה has the same sense here as in verse 11, “The work which God has appointed for him.” עָלָיו is to be construed with לְהוֹסִיף in the sense, “to add to it.”

Ver. 15. “The past event has already happened, and “there is no changing it, and so the future event is fixed by “God, as though it had already happened; for he has already “decreed respecting it that it is to happen; and the condition “of the past and future is not really different as being such; “for the one is past and has already been, and the other is “future and will have been; and when its time and season “come, the future will become past; for God has willed that “things should come and roll on one after another, as if the “future constantly pursued or followed the past; and this is “what is meant by God’s ‘requiring the past to be pursued “by the future,’ יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־בְּרָדָּה, that agreeably to the pre-



15 statuere ut ab hominibus ipse *solus* metuatur. Quod fuit jamdudum fuit, et quodcunque erit est quasi

“ordained decree one event comes after another, and so they  
“cleave in closely connected sequence one to the other, like the  
“links of a chain, and roll one after the other in continual  
“pursuit.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה. Mendlessohn explains this as merely signifying that God requires that sequence of events which takes place in the world, the past to be followed by the future, and that the future is just as much within His grasp as the past, and that all events, past, present, and to come, are viewed and overruled by him simultaneously, and required to make their appearance in the order which he has fixed. Rosenmuller, agreeably with the rendering of the Vulgate, “Deus instaurat quod abiit,” would apparently render it, “God requires the recurrence of what is past,” so that there is nothing new in the world; he says, “Deus propulsa quærit, reparat.” He cites, very much to his purpose, Job iii. 4, where speaking of his birth-day Job says, אֵל יִדְרֹשֵׁהוּ אֱלֹהִים מִמָּעַל, “Ne requirat eam Deus superne,” which he explains soon after by saying, אֵל יִהְיֶה בִּימֵי שָׁנָה בְּמִסְפַּר יָרְחִים אֶל־יָבוֹא, “Let it not rejoice among the days of the year; into the number of the months let it not come;” so that דְּרֹשׁ is there equivalent to בִּקֵּשׁ in the above phrase, and Job means that he hopes the recurrence of that day may not be required by God, but that it may be expunged from the series of the days of the year, so that no other day may be annually placed in its room to correspond to it. Though it seems strange at first sight to make this passage mean, “that God requires the actual recurrence of past events,” it must be recollected that Solomon has already said that whatever seems to us to be new has

jamdudum fuerit, et repetit Deus quod fugatum (vel "præteritum") est. Vidi autem præterea sub 16 sole locum judicii ibi esse improbitatem, et locum justitiæ ibi esse injustitiam. Itaque dixi mecum, 17 "Justum et injustum judicabit Deus, tempus enim est illic constitutum omni negotio omnique operi."

really taken place before, and that whatever has happened will happen again, which seems to imply the same thing, and the passage may therefore be rendered indifferently, "God requires the past to be pursued or followed by the future," or, "God requires the recurrence of the past." The Targum takes נִרְדָּף to mean, "the persecuted man," "God avenges the persecuted," and "requires him at the hand of his oppressor;" this sense agrees very well with the following passage, but not at all with the former part of the same verse. Beside the reading in this case would probably have been, אֶת הַנִּרְדָּף, not אֶת־נִרְדָּף.

Ver. 16. "He now begins to speak of the existence of "the soul of man after the death of the body, and of reward "and punishment in a future state. He says, 'I saw under "the sun, and behold! the world was full of oppression and "violence; the unjust man sought to swallow up him who was "more righteous than himself, and the place from which we "expect justice, that very place was the place of violence, and so "also of the place of righteousness.' Now the recompensing evil "to the doers of evil is called justice, (מִשְׁפָּט,) and the recom- "pensing good to the doers of good is called righteousness, (צֶדֶק,) and injustice, רָשָׁע, is the opposite of both these, and "accordingly we find it opposed to them both in the text.

רָשָׁע. This is put for the abstract noun רָשָׁע on account "of the pause; the noun of quality or adjective רָשָׁע, is al-

16 הִיָּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת־נִרְדָּף : וְעוֹד רָאִיתִי תַחַת  
 הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מְקוֹם הַמִּשְׁפָּט שָׁמָּה הָרָשָׁע וּמְקוֹם הַצֶּדֶק  
 17 שָׁמָּה הָרָשָׁע : אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בְלִבִּי אֶת־הַצִּדִּיק וְאֶת־  
 הָרָשָׁע יִשְׁפֹּט הָאֱלֹהִים בִּי־עַת לְכָל־חַפֵּץ וְעַל כָּל־

“ways written with a kametz (◌◌) under the last syllable, and  
 “would not have it altered to a pathack (◌◌) at the pause.”  
 Mendlessohn.

Ver. 17. “Since I could not but wonder to see that the  
 “perfidious man practised perfidy, and the plunderer plundered,  
 “and their way still prospered, and good men continued in  
 “poverty, and all their days were spent in trouble, though  
 “it is true that all the ways of God are judgment, for ‘just  
 “and right is he,’ I inferred that the truth must be, that  
 “God will judge the righteous and the wicked at some  
 “future time, and although this be delayed, it will at last  
 “take place in its proper hour, for there is a doom for every  
 “action, and for every work there is a trial and account in the  
 “world to come. And indeed the truth is that the prosperity  
 “of the wicked and the chastisement of the just in this life  
 “is a sufficient proof of the existence of the soul after death;  
 “for no person however perverse can deny that the judge of  
 “all the earth is ‘a God of truth, and without iniquity;’ and  
 “unless God did justice and justified the righteous and con-  
 “demned the wicked, he could not escape the imputation of evil  
 “and violence, (heaven pardon the thought!). Consequently  
 “every one who believes in the divine attributes, that He is  
 “righteous and loving righteousness and justice, cannot escape  
 “from one of these two alternatives; either he must believe  
 “in the immortality of the soul and reward and punishment

18 הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שֵׁם : אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בְלִפְי עַל-דִּבְרַת בְּנֵי

הָאָדָם לְבָרָם הָאֱלֹהִים וְלִרְאוֹת שֶׁהֵם-בְּהֵמָה הֵמָּה

“in the life to come; or he must deny what he sees with his own eyes, and say that there is not found a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, or a wicked man prospering in his wickedness; and here the wise man expresses himself briefly; but in the 11th Section he afterwards enlarges on this topic, adducing strong proofs such as must be perfectly satisfactory to any intelligent person.” Mendlesohn.

NOTE. עֵת means here “a time of account,” just as in viii. 6, where it is used as synonymous with מִשְׁפֵּט. It may be rendered “doom.”

Ver. 18. “I said again to myself, It is clear that this is an argument to which there is no answer. Now part of the sons of men say that examination into the nature of the soul will suffice to make us believe in its immortality, for that God has chosen and preferred man above all creatures, (and this is the meaning of ‘with respect to their saying לְבָרָם הָאֱלֹהִים’ i. e. that God has chosen them, and has preferred them above all the creatures of the world, to grant them knowledge and understanding and intelligence.) But I see that the truth is not so, but בְּהֵמָה הֵמָּה לָהֶם, i. e. that the sons of men when deserted by the providence of God and left to themselves, are not in themselves at all superior to beasts; and to express this he doubles the word הֵם, and says, הֵמָּה לָהֶם, as we should say, ‘that when left to themselves, (הֵמָּה-לָהֶם) they are like the beasts of the earth.’” Mendlesohn.

18 Quod ad dictum attinet hominum, "Deum ipsos *reliquis animalibus* præferre," mecum ratiocinatus sum cernere eos debere per seipsos se meros bestias

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NOTE. The rabbinic commentators make the following remarks on this passage.

דְּבַר means the same as דְּבִיר, that is, "what is said."

לְבָרָם הָאֱלֹהִים is a verb in the past tense, and is equivalent in sense to אֲשֶׁר בָּרָם הָאֱלֹהִים, "that God has chosen them." Though it is not usual that the servile letters הִבְכֵּם should be joined as prefixes to verbs in the past tense, still we find sometimes that such verbs have a servile ה prefixed to them when it can be only interpreted to mean אֲשֶׁר, "that;" thus in 2 Chron. xxix. 36, עַל הַהֵכֵן הָאֱלֹהִים לָעַם, "on the account," or, "because that God prepared the people." (This may mean "established, confirmed the heart of the people," לֵב being understood after הֵכֵן.) 1 Chron. xxix. 17, הַנִּמְצְאוּ, "That were found," that is, "the people that were found." 1 Chron. xxvi. 28, כָּל הַהִקְדִּישׁ שֵׁם, "All that Samuel consecrated;" and we also find a servile ב in this sense, as בְּהֵכֵן לוֹ דָּוִד, "That he established David for himself." In this sense in all probability לְ is used in this passage. And בָּרָם is the past tense בָּרָה with the affix of the objective third person plural, which causes the ה to disappear. This verb בָּרָה bears here the same sense as it does in the passage בְּרוּ לָכֶם אִישׁ, "Choose you a man." If we take it to be the infinitive mood and the root בָּרַר, there is a difficulty about the vowels. It would have been then regular for the ב to have under it a kametz chatuphi (ִ), and the ר to be dageshed, after the form לְהַמָּם, Deut. ii. 15, (ad quassandum eos,) from הָמָם, (for



esse; namque homines casibus obnoxios esse, et 19  
bestias casibus obnoxios, et unum eundemque casum

the kametz chatuph (ֿ) and the kibbutz (ֿ) are allied by the nature of pronunciation, and consequently the form of the word is not altered by the appearance of the one in the place of the other). But because a ר refuses to admit a dagesh, kametz gadol (ֿ) will have been put under the ב, instead of (ֿ) on this hypothesis, whereas kametz chatuph ought to have been changed into a cholem (ֿ) in this case, as being the parent long-vowel of kibbutz and kametz chatuph, and the word should have been לְבָרַךְ, as in the words בְּרִיתָ, מֶרֶק, שָׂרָף, which all occur in Scripture, and are Puhul forms where the (ֿ) has been changed into (ֿ), because the ר will not admit a dagesh. We must therefore take it from בָּרָה.

It must be observed with regard to these remarks, that the rabbinic commentator, choosing to take the text as it stands in the Masoretic copies, without admitting suggestions from any others, seems to have assumed that the word בָּרַךְ is not a contracted form. This being assumed, its form cannot as he says be any other but that of the third person singular præterite of the verb בָּרָה, with the objective pronominal affix ך of the third person plural; for the verb בָּרַר under the same circumstances would give us the form לְבָרַרְךָ, and not לְבָרַךְ; and it has been satisfactorily shewn that it cannot be infinitive Kal of בָּרַר, for then it would have been לְבָרֵךְ after the form לְהַפֵּם in Deuteronomy. Observe that the verb בָּרָה means only “to choose,” and “to eat.”

Yarchi, on the other hand, says that some copies read לְבָרַךְ, (which would be the infinitive Pihel of בָּרַר with the affix; for we find this infinitive לְבָרֵר in Daniel iii. 11) and that לְבָרַךְ must be a contraction for it, and renders it לְהוֹדִיעַם,

לָהֶם : כִּי מִקֵּרָה בְנֵי-הָאָדָם וּמִקֵּרָה הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִקֵּרָה 19

i. e. "Ut notum iis faciat." He takes the Chaldee sense of the word בָּרַר, viz. "purgare," "mundare," and hence, "dilucidare," "declarare." The whole sense of the passage would thus be, "Cogitavi mecum de ratione et conditione filiorum hominis eam talem esse ut declaret iis Deus et ut videant quod ipsi per seipsos bestię sint." "I said to myself with respect to the sons of men, *that their condition is such* that God shews them clearly and that they can see that in themselves they are but beasts." Supposing the above contraction, and that עַל הַבְּרִית means, "with respect to," "with respect to the condition of," this rendering is quite compatible with the Hebrew; but it is unworthy of the inspired writer, and not to be put in comparison with the ingenious version of Mendlessohn. According to him, the conjunction ו before לְרִאוֹת is merely conductive to the sense, and may be expressed in English by, "I say," as in Exod. xii. 15 and 19, וַיִּבְרָתָהּ, "That soul, I say, shall be cut off." Vid. Eccles. iv. 10, 11, וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי לְהַקְיֵמוֹ, וְהָם לָהֶם, and numberless other instances. Its use is to recall the attention after a parenthesis or after a description of the subject of the sentence; and I render ver. 18, "I thought with myself with respect to the saying of the sons of men that God has preferred them by his especial choice, I thought, I say, that they ought to see that by themselves they are but beasts," לְרִאוֹת being here an infinitive, expressing duty and obligation. So we frequently find the infinitive used for an imperative, chap. v. 1, וְקָרֹב לְשָׁמוֹעַ, "And draw near to hear," and Exod. xxii. 8, וָזָכֹר, "memento," and Deut. v. 12, וְשָׁמֹר, "custodi," at the beginnings of sentences.

Ver. 19, 20. "And if we were to form our judgment of

אָחֵר לָהֶם בְּמוֹת זֶה בֶּן מוֹת זֶה וְרוּחַ אֲחֵר לִפְלִי  
 20 וּמוֹתֵר הָאָדָם מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין כִּי הַפֶּל הַפֶּל : הַפֶּל  
 הוֹלֵךְ אֶל־מָקוֹם אֲחֵר הַפֶּל הִיא מִן־הָעֶפֶר וְהַפֶּל  
 21 יָשָׁב אֶל־הָעֶפֶר : מִי יוֹדֵעַ רוּחַ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם הָעֹלָה  
 הִיא לְמַעַלָּה וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה הִירֶדֶת הִיא לְמַטָּה לָאָרֶץ :

“man and his condition from what we see in this world only,  
 “behold the sons of men would be mere creatures of accident in  
 “this world, without any enduring substance” (מְקָרָה and עֲצָמוֹת)  
 are opposed as ‘accident and substance’ by the schoolmen,)  
 “and the beast is also the creature of accident, and the same  
 “accidents belong to both of them in all the changes which  
 “pass over them. מְקָרָה is written three times in this verse  
 “with a segol (ֶ), and this shews that each time it is in the  
 “absolute form, for if it had been in a state of construction,  
 “it would have taken a tzere (ֵ) instead.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The meaning of the first part of verse 19, is,  
 “For the sons of men are mere chance, just as the beasts are  
 mere chance,” ךְ being a conjugation of comparison, as it is in  
 Job v. 7, and in Prov. xxv. 25, “Aqua frigida animæ lassæ, et  
 (i. e. est sicut) nuncius bonus e terra longinqua.” Observe that  
 מוֹת is the state of construction of מוֹת, “death,” the verb to  
 die being מוֹת.

Ver. 21. “Some of the interpreters have thought that  
 “the meaning of this verse is, ‘Who knows if the spirit of  
 “the sons of men goes up, &c.’ but this interpretation is con-  
 “trary to the accents, because the word הָאָדָם has (ֶ), וְקָרָא  
 “a distinctive accent of the second class, and the word יוֹדֵעַ

utrisque posse contingere, sicut horum mortem  
 sic illorum mortem, et eundem utrisque spiritum  
*vitæ* esse, et nullam esse homini bestię præstan-  
 20 tiam, sed utrumque merum halitum esse, utrum-  
 que ad eundem locum ire, utrumque ex pulvere  
 21 ortum esse, et utrumque ad pulverem redire; so-  
 lum scientem scire de spiritu hominum quod sursum  
 ascendat, et de spiritu bestiarum quod deorsum ad

“ has the accent פְּקִידוֹ, or רִבְעִי as it is otherwise called; where-  
 “ as according to this rendering the words בְּנֵי הָאָדָם would  
 “ have been less separated by accent from the next words;  
 “ and the word יוֹדֵעַ ought to have had the accent (:) זָקֵף, as  
 “ any one skilled in the accents will be aware. And agreeably  
 “ to the accents it is explained thus; ‘He only who is intelligent  
 “ can understand and comprehend the nature of the spirit of the  
 “ sons of men, whether it ascends upwards, and the nature of  
 “ the spirit of the beast, whether it goes down to the earth;’  
 “ for the investigation into the nature of the soul is subtle and  
 “ exceedingly deep, and it is difficult to bring from it proof that  
 “ man is distinguished above the rest of creatures, as the sons  
 “ of men say they are; and as to the body they are alike in all  
 “ the accidents which befall them.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. According to Mendlessohn’s ingenious rendering, יוֹדֵעַ  
 must be supplied after יוֹדֵעַ from the latter word. Vid. Joel ii. 14,  
 where מִי יוֹדֵעַ is used in exactly the same sense; “He who is  
 intelligent, (who is wise in divine and spiritual things,) will  
 return and repent, and leave behind him with the priest an  
 offering to the Lord.” And Jonah iii. 9, “He who hath un-  
 derstanding will turn back (from his evil way), and God will  
 repent and turn away from his fierce anger, &c.”

terram descendat: comperique nil melius esse *quod* 22  
*ad istud dictum* quam quod lætitiā quisque ex opere  
 suo perciperet, quippe quæ *solus* ejus esset fructus;  
 quis enim eum duceret ut illud videret quod post <sup>CAP.</sup> 1V.  
 eum futurum esset? Itaque revertēbar ad contem- 1  
 plandas cunctas oppressiones quæ fiunt sub sole, et  
 ecce! lachrymæ oppressorum, nec quisquam iis con-  
 solator! et ex parte oppressorum potestas erat, et

Observe that this verse and the two preceding are all in  
 the "obliqua oratio," being all a portion of Solomon's reflections  
 on the "saying of the sons of men" mentioned above. The  
 same is the case with verse 22, from "nil melius esse." He  
 says that he perceived that on the ground of that "saying"  
 alone the best thing man could do would be to enjoy himself in  
 this life, as it would be impossible for him to discover any-  
 thing of the life beyond or about a future judgment.

Ver. 22. "And consequently but for the strong proof  
 "mentioned above of the immortality of the soul and rewards  
 "and punishments in a future state I should have concluded  
 "that there was nothing better for man than his enjoying him-  
 "self in his employment while he is yet alive, for that this is  
 "clearly his portion; since who should bring him to see into  
 "what shall be hereafter?" Is not the understanding the nature  
 "of the soul a deep matter, and one that requires arguments  
 "which none but the ablest investigators can comprehend? and  
 "with respect to the body men and beasts are liable to the  
 "same accidents; and how then can they derive consolation  
 "from that view of the subject? whereas the above is a satis-  
 "factory proof of the immortality of the soul and reward and  
 "punishment in the life to come, as I have explained." Men-  
 dlessohn.



וְרָאִיתִי כִּי אֵין טוֹב מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמַח הָאָדָם בְּמַעֲשָׁיו 22  
 כִּי-הוּא חָלָקוֹ כִּי מִי יִבְיָאֲנוּ לְרֹאוֹת בְּמָה שִׁיְהִיָּה  
 CHAP. IV.  
 אַחֲרָיו : וְשָׁבֹתִי אֲנִי וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת-כָּל-הָעֲשָׁקִים אֲשֶׁר 1  
 נַעֲשִׂים תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהִנֵּה . דְּמַעַת הָעֲשָׁקִים וְאֵין  
 לָהֶם מְנַחֵם וּמִיָּד עֲשֻׁקֵיהֶם כָּח וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם :

NOTE. He therefore returns to the consideration of the unequal administration of justice in the world, as a more conclusive argument than the above for the existence of a life to come.

Ver. 1. "He says, 'I perceived that the investigation of the nature of the soul does not bring men out of doubt; so I returned to contemplate all the oppressions done under the sun, and how that under the government of a God of truth who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity the oppressed were mourning and crying in the bitterness of their soul, while they had no comforter; and that the oppressors were compelling them by the power and authority in their hands to all that they pleased, and that they were bending under their hands without any comforter, and much less a deliverer and sustainer; and hence I inferred that the truth must undoubtedly be what I have said, that there is a time for every business and every work there, and that God will bring the oppressor and the oppressed to judgment, and render to them according to their deserts.'" Mendlesohn.

NOTE. וְשָׁבֹתִי וְאֶרְאֶה, literally, "I returned and contemplated," i. e. "I contemplated again," or, "I returned to the contemplation."

2 וְשִׁבַּח אֲנִי אֶת־הַמֵּתִים שֶׁנִּבְרַר מֵתוֹ מִן־הַחַיִּים אֲשֶׁר  
 3 הָמָּה חַיִּים עַדְנָה : וְטוֹב מִשְׁנִיָּהֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָדָן  
 לֹא הָיָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־רָאָה אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה  
 תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם :

עֲשִׂיָּהֶם, &c. Some render this, supplying אֵין before כֹּחַ from what follows, "And there was no strength (to deliver) from the hand of their oppressors, and no comforter." I have preferred to render מִיָּד, "ex parte," "on the side of." וְ in the last clause may perhaps mean, "so that;" otherwise there seems to be a needless repetition of the same sentence, viz. אֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם; and the fact of their having no comforter is explained by mention of the overwhelming power of their oppressors, which deterred all from daring to offer consolation. We find the word עֲשִׂיָּהֶם evidently used in the sense of "oppressions" in Amos iii. 9. So Gesenius renders it in that passage, and in this. In the second case דְּמַעַת עֲשִׂיָּהֶם, it must mean, "the oppressed," and it would therefore be more consistent to render it the same in the first case also, but then the word נַעֲשָׂים would be unsuitable.

Ver. 2, 3. "For if it were not so, I should have been 'praising the dead who are already dead above the living 'who are still alive;' (שִׁבַּח is the infinitive Pihel instead of a 'participle;) (3) 'and I should have been praising as better off 'than either of them him who has not yet been born and has not 'seen the evil deeds done under the sun; and it is certain that 'God (heaven pardon the thought!) has not created man upon 'the earth for his evil, and to be always taking vengeance on 'him, but in his great mercy, to pour out of His goodness upon 'him; and where is this goodness if man only live a few days, 'so as to see the tears of the oppressed, or to be himself op-

2 nemo iis aderat consolator! adeo ut *primo visu*  
 feliciores prædicarem mortuos, quod jampridem  
 obiissent, quam vivos quod superstites adhuc es-  
 3 sent; et beatiorem utrisque qui adhuc non extiterat  
 quod non vidisset mala facinora quæ sub sole fiunt.

“pressed and crushed, and after that should die like the death  
 “of the beast, and perish by an irreparable destruction? Such  
 “are not the ways of God. The truth of the matter must be, as  
 “I have said, that God will judge the righteous and the wicked.  
 “Here ends the discussion on the immortality of the soul.

“עֲדָנָה is a contraction for עַד הֵנָּה, ‘as far as here;’ and  
 “so עָרֶן is for עַד הֵן, where the final ה is wanting.” Men-  
 dlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 2. וְשִׁבְחָהּ אֲנִי may be rendered, “So that I  
 was ready to praise,” i. e. the view of the oppressions mentioned  
 above, without taking into consideration a future account, made  
 it appear preferable to this life never to have existed at all,  
 so that the reality of a future judgment was necessary for the  
 demonstration of the benevolence of the deity. The expression  
 וְשִׁבְחָהּ אֲנִי would seem superfluous after הַמֵּתִים, if we render  
 שִׁ “who.” It would be better therefore to render it, “in that,”  
 as well as אֲשֶׁר in what follows.

Ver. 3. מִטּוֹב מִ means here, as it does in several passages  
 of this book, not “better than,” but “better off than,” “having  
 a better lot than.” In this passage, as well as in the corre-  
 sponding one in Section xi, Solomon concludes his reasoning not  
 with an explicit declaration of the existence of a future state,  
 but with a lively description of the hopeless misery of our con-  
 dition here without it, whereby he implies its certainty, because  
 God must have formed his creatures for their good, and not for  
 His vengeance.

## SECTIO SEPTIMA.

Porro animadverti omnem laboriosam industriam 4  
et omnem operis successum, quod in invidiâ constant  
quâ quisque a vicino suo afficitur, adeo ut hæc  
quoque ceu halitus essent aut ventosa imaginatio.  
Ignavus complicat manus suas, et quasi suam ipsius 5  
carnem comedit. Melior est pugillus quietis, quam 6

---

Ver. 4. "He says with respect to political prosperity,  
"that according to the opinion of some statesmen, the state  
"will be prosperous and happy if the men are laborious and  
"diligent in all sorts of business, and if their employment  
"consist in successful manufacture, i. e. such as is in the highest  
"degree good and excellent and acceptable to merchants, and  
"this is the opinion of most kings and princes in our times;  
"and it appears from Scripture that king Solomon too had  
"been inclined to entertain it; but now he saw that this too  
"was in vain; for that this sort of prosperity is founded on  
"the jealousy of each against his neighbour; that one wishes  
"to excel his fellow in his house, his clothes, his furniture, his  
"ornaments, his valuables, and all things which he takes pride  
"in; and hence if you incite the men of a state to labour and  
"successful manufacture, you will be kindling in spite of yourself  
"the flame of jealousy and self-exaltation in their hearts; and  
"your reward will thus turn to your injury; for it is better for  
"them to be contented, and not seek superfluity; and then they  
"will not lift up themselves in pride each against his neighbour,  
"but they will reject all 'pleasant pictures,' and thus there

## THE SEVENTH SECTION.

וְרָאִיתִי אֲנִי אֶת-כָּל-עֵמֶל וְאֵת כָּל-בְּשָׂרוֹן הַמַּעֲשֶׂה 4

כִּי הִיא קִנְאֶת-אִישׁ מֵרֵעֵהוּ גַם-זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוֹת רֹוח׃

הַבֶּסִיל הַבֶּק אֶת-יָדָיו וְאָכַל אֶת-בְּשָׂרוֹ׃ טוֹב מֵלֹא 5, 6

“will be no occasion for this successful manufacture.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. קִנְאֶת-אִישׁ מֵרֵעֵהוּ means “The jealousy of a man arising from his neighbour,” i. e. “with which he is affected by seeing his neighbour’s prosperity,” or, as we say, “a man’s jealousy of his neighbour.” From this unavoidable connexion of industry with jealousy he infers that industry too is included under the general denomination of vanity.

Ver. 5. “The diligent man blames the indolent man, saying, ‘The fool who folds his hands and eats up all he has “without labouring to increase his stock, is, as though he devoured his own flesh.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I prefer to understand this verse as describing the opposite extreme to that depicted in the preceding; that whereas one man is driven on by jealousy to laborious industry, another lives on his patrimony in indolence, and exhausts it without making any steps to repair the inroads he makes upon it; for this is the meaning of “devouring his own flesh.” There is still another interpretation which connects this verse with the preceding, without making any opposition between them, viz.



7 כֶּף נָחַת מִמֶּלֶא חֲפָנִים עֲמַל וִרְעוֹת רוּחַ : וְשִׁבְתִּי  
 8 אֲנִי וְאַרְאֶה הֶבֶל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ : יֵשׁ אַחֲרָי וְאִין שְׁנִי  
 גַּם בֶּן וָאָח אֵין-לוֹ וְאִין קֵץ לְכָל-עֲמָלוֹ גַּם-עֵינָיו  
 לֹא-תִשְׁבַּע עֶשֶׂר וְלָמִי . אֲנִי עֲמַל וּמַחְסֹר אֶת-נַפְשִׁי  
 9 מִטּוֹבָה גַּם-יָהּ הֶבֶל וְעֵנִין רָע הוּא : טוֹבִים הַשָּׁנִים

“The fool wrings his hands, and gnaws his flesh with envy;” but the rendering I have adopted is supported by Prov. vi. 10, where the sluggard says, מָעַט חֲבֵק יָדַי לְשָׂכָב, and חֲבֵק יָדַי expresses indolence, and not vexation.

Ver. 6. “And the indolent man answers, ‘Better for me “is it that I should be content with a little, with a handful in “peace and quiet, than have both hands full of labour and “trouble, like the employment of the diligent man, who la-  
 “bours all day with a mere windy notion, that is to say, “devises empty schemes as to what he shall do on the morrow, “whereby and how he shall get wages and the like.’ מֶלֶא is  
 “a noun substantive; the hollow of the hand is called כֶּף,  
 “because it is כְּפוּפָה, ‘bent.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I still venture to differ from Mendlessohn, and take this verse as teaching a middle course between his who squanders till he is reduced to beggary, and his who is always labouring with toilsome industry to surpass his neighbour in wealth. “Better is a quiet handful, i. e. the earnings of one who is diligent without anxiety, than the enjoyment of the fruits of an ill-directed industry.” Observe that the words וִרְעוֹת רוּחַ are repeated to mark the reference to the labour

plena utraque vola laboris meræque ventosæ imagina-  
 7 tionis. Equidem redii ad contemplationem vanitatis  
 8 sub sole. Est qui solus vivit, cui non est aliquis  
 secundus, cui neque filius est neque frater, et cujus  
 tamen laborum nullus est finis neque oculus divitiis  
 satiatur; et quempropter ego *si talis essem* labora-  
 rem et genium meum voluptate defraudarem? sed  
 ista quoque vana est et mala occupatio, (*sive mali*  
 9 occupatio). Præstant duo uni, quia est illis merces

of the jealous man spoken of above. The word מָלֵא denotes that with which anything is full, as in the phrase אֶרֶץ וּמְלֹאָהּ, “The earth and all that fills it.” מָלֵא כַף is “what can be held in the hollow of one hand;” מָלֵא חֲפָנִים is “what can be held within the two hands held together.”

Ver. 7, 8. “He now speaks about the love of company, “and shews that it is good for a man to seek a help-mate. “He says, ‘There is the case of a single man, who has no “second person connected with him, that is, who has no wife “or children.’” Mendlessohn.

The קרי on the word עֵינִי is עֵינִי.

NOTE. In verse 8, he supposes himself in the place of the miser, and says, “If I had no connexions, for whom should I be toiling? and since I should have none to provide for, why should I be avaricious and self-denying to no purpose?” Some read עֵינִי instead of עֵינִי; the sense would then be “the occupation of a bad man.” The same diversity of reading occurs in verse 13, where the former is the preferable one, and that adopted by Mendlessohn. Here perhaps the latter gives the best sense.

Ver. 9. “In the king’s desire to increase industry and

bona laboris sui. Nam si lapsi fuerint alter eriget 10  
alterum; væ autem soli isti si lapsus erit, quum  
nullus alter est qui eum erigat! Quinetiam si una 11  
cubant duo, calebunt; uni vero soli quomodo erit

“diligence in his dominions he here advises the people of his  
“country that men and women should marry in order that  
“they may have good reward for their labour; for ‘the happi-  
“ness of a family is in the number of it.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. “They have a good reward for their labour,” be-  
cause they can often effect things in concert which singly they  
could not perform, and because they enjoy their earnings better  
together than they could alone.

Ver. 10. “For even if both of them are laid together on  
“the bed of sickness, nevertheless each of them will be able to  
“cherish and support the other on the couch of languishing  
“with much prayer and watchful attention, till they rise from  
“it and the sick person says, ‘I am strong;’ but woe to the  
“single man! &c.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn takes נָפַל here as referring to illness;  
but it may also refer to any loss or disaster, which a married  
couple can better bear up under than a single individual. The  
literal rendering of the first clause is, “Nam si lapsi fuerint  
unus eriget socium suum.” I have rendered the latter clause  
agreeably to the accents; the pause of the zakeph on שִׁיבָה is  
neglected if we render it as some have done, “because he may  
fall, and there be none to help him to rise.”

Ver. 11. “When a man and woman warm and comfort  
“one another, there is no need for them to procure themselves  
“clothes to cover them on their bed to warm themselves in;  
“but for the single man, how shall he be warm on his bed at  
“night by covering himself only with the clothes which he has

מִן-הָאָחֵר אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלָהֶם שָׁכָר טוֹב בְּעֵמָלָם : כִּי 10  
 אִם-יָפְלוּ הָאָחֵר יָקִים אֶת-חֲבֵרוֹ וְאִילוּ הָאָחֵר שִׁיפֹל  
 וְאִין שְׁנֵי לְהַקִּימוֹ : גַּם אִם-יִשְׁכְּבוּ שְׁנַיִם וְחַם 11

“to wear? He must necessarily procure blankets and coverlets  
 “to keep himself warm in; and if so, he will not have good  
 “recompense for his labour.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. חַם and יָחַם are both impersonal forms from חָמַם. The first is the præterite Kal, the second the future Niphal. חָמַם יָחַם is rendered literally, “It will be warm to them;” the ך being merely conductive to the sense, and at the same time conversive, because the preceding verb is in the future tense. It may be here observed that the ך is not conversive when prefixed to a præterite, unless there be a preceding verb in the future tense or in the imperative mood immediately before it in the sentence. The intervention of a clause containing several participles, all of which follow the tense of the preceding future verb, as in 2 Kings v. 18, does not deprive the ך of its conversive power.

Mendlessohn seems to have adopted an interpretation of the phrase, “They have good reward for their labour,” which is somewhat frivolous and far-fetched; he implies that a married couple will make their wages go farther than a single man, because they will not have to go to so much expense in blankets, their contact keeping them warm. So we find him in another passage explaining a miser’s being said “to eat in the dark,” by the remark, that such an one will not choose to pay for candle-light, whereas in all probability the expression only refers to the gloominess of a miser’s disposition. Such notions of parsimony could hardly have suggested themselves to the royal and magnificent Solomon.

12 לָהֶם וּלְאַחֵר אֵיךְ יַחֵם : וְאִם-יִתְקַפּוּ הָאַחֵר הַשְּׁנָיִם  
 יַעֲמִדוּ נַגְדּוֹ וְהַחוּט הַמְּשָׁלֵשׁ לֹא בִמְהֵרָה יִנָּתֵק :  
 13 טוֹב יֵלֵךְ מִסֶּבֶן וְחֹבֶם מִמֶּלֶךְ זָקֵן וּבָסִיל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדַּע  
 14 לְהִזְהָר עוֹד : כִּי-מִבֵּית הַסּוּרִים יֵצֵא לְמֶלֶךְ כִּי גֵם

Ver. 12. “תִּקַּף is a transitive verb. We find it also in “Job xiv. 20, ‘תִּתְקַפְּהוּ לְנֶפֶשׁ,’ ‘Thou wilt oppress him for “ever.’ In verse 12, we have the other pronominal affix masculine line joined with this verb, viz. ם instead of הוּ. The rendering “agreeably with the accents is, ‘If an individual (הָאִיחָד) shall “oppress him, i. e. either of the two who are united by friend- “ship, the two will both of them withstand him, i. e. that in- “dividual.’ (‘Resistent’ is equivalent to ‘resistere valebunt.’)

“What is meant by the triple cord not being quickly “broken is, that if they give birth to a son, he will be able “to stand up with them against their adversaries; and so says “the Psalmist, (who in this case is Solomon), ‘Like as the “arrows in the hands of the giant, so are the young children. “Happy is the man who hath his quiver full of them, he shall “not be ashamed when he speaks with his enemies in the “gate.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The oppressor here must necessarily be a single individual, as, if there be more than one oppressor, the advantage that two will have against them is not obviously necessary.

Ver. 13, 14. “He here is directing his attention to go- “vernment and regal authority, and the glory of a king in his “servants and his people, and his prosperity on his throne; “and he says, ‘A man who has lived but few years, who is poor



12 calor? Quod si opprimuerit alterutrum unus qui-  
 dam, duo ei resistent; et filum triplex non cito  
 13 rumpetur. "Præstat juvenis pauper et prudens regi  
 14 seni et stolido qui nescit amplius admoneri; etiam-  
 si e carcere victorum ad regnandum prodeat; nam  
 qui in imperio suo nascitur nascitur hic quoque

---

"but intelligent, is better off than an old and foolish king, who  
 "will not hearken to the voice of those who would put him on  
 "his guard, since he who is old in folly makes stiff his neck  
 "and hardens his heart to such a degree that he will not be-  
 "lieve his servants when they tell him the truth. Even if this  
 "indigent man comes out of a house of bondsmen the case is  
 "still the same; for even the old king was poor at the day of  
 "his birth." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I venture in this place to differ from Mendlessohn's  
 method of explaining the arrangement and distribution of these  
 and the following verses. I conceive verses 13 and 14 to be  
 the murmurings of the discontented people of Israel desirous  
 to raise Jeroboam to the throne, who was the son of a slave of  
 Solomon's, as we find from Kings xi. 26. They said, "A poor  
 and indigent but wise youth is better than an old and foolish  
 king, who is too old to be advised, (literally, 'who knows no  
 longer to be advised,') even if he come out of a house of bonds-  
 men to rule, for even he who is born to royalty has nothing  
 when he comes into the world." Solomon then answers their  
 objections by saying, that when Jeroboam is made king they  
 will soon want another, and thus points out the worthlessness of  
 popularity. כִּי, "even though," thus in Psal. xxv. 11, "Par-  
 don my iniquity," כִּי רַב הוּא "even though it be great;"  
 Psal. xli. 5, "Heal my soul," כִּי חָטָאתִי לָךְ "even though  
 I have sinned against thee." Psal. lxxi. 15, "My mouth shall

pauper." Equidem videbam omnes vivos, qui ambu- 15  
labant sub sole, juvenis istius partibus adhærere qui  
priori illi successurus est proximus. Nulla finis est 16  
de cuncti populi sententiâ omnibus rebus quæ *tem-*  
*pore* existunt *suo et* se coram, neque magis in isto  
posterî lætabuntur; hoc quoque enim ceu halitus  
est et ventosa cogitatio.

---

recount (number up) thy righteousness, thy salvation all day,"  
כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי סְפֹרוֹת, "although I know not the numbers of  
*it.*" הָסָפִירִים is contracted for הָאֲסָפִירִים to facilitate the pronun-  
ciation. The want of א is indicated by the (ַ) under the ה, and if written out fully, it would be הָאֲסָפִירִים. For similar  
elisions, vid. Job xxxv. מִלְּפָנָי, for מֵאֲלֻפָּנָי. Ezek. xxi. 33, לְהִכָּל,  
for לְהִיאָכִיל, and also 2 Sam. xix. 14, compared with xx. 9, &c.  
This only happens in cases where the ה and א have the same  
vowel in the uncontracted form, for in the case of הָאֲכָל the  
(-) and (ֹ) are treated as the same.

נִלְדַּךְ must be repeated again with רָשׁ, "He who was born  
to a throne was born poor, and came naked out of his mother's  
womb."

Ver. 15. "It should seem that the children of Israel were  
"murmuring against Solomon with expressions of discontent, and  
"extolling Jeroboam who stood high in the esteem of the peo-  
"ple as appears from what we read in Scripture, Kings x. 11,  
"And the king knew what they were murmuring in their bed-  
"chambers; and he here as it were answers their words, and  
"says, 'I saw all the people going after the youth next in  
"succession, who shall accede after the king, and their eyes fail  
"with waiting for the time when he shall succeed to the throne  
"of the kingdom;' and he is called the youth next in suc-

בְּמִלְכוּתוֹ נוֹלַד רֶשֶׁת: רָאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-הַחַיִּים הַמְּהֻלָּכִים 15  
 תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עִם הַיֶּלֶד הַשָּׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֵד תַּחְתּוֹ:  
 אִיוֹקָן לְכָל-הָעָם לָכֵל אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה לְפָנֶיהֶם גַּם 16  
 הָאֲחֵרִים לֹא יִשְׁמָחוּ-בּוֹ כִּי-גַם-זֶה הָבֵל וְרַעֲיוֹן  
 רוּחַ:

“cession, either (according to the simple interpretation of those  
 “ words,) because he was to come after the then king, or, (still  
 “ supposing Jeroboam to be here intended), since Rehoboam was  
 “ the king’s son, and had more right to succeed to the kingdom  
 “ than Jeroboam, Rehoboam might be called the first in suc-  
 “ cession, and Jeroboam the next.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The meaning of the word מְהֻלָּכִים here is nothing  
 more than “living,” (unless we choose to neglect the accents,  
 and connect it with עִם in the sense of “walking with,” “ad-  
 hering to,”) and according to the accents the words אֶת-כָּל  
 הַחַיִּים הַמְּהֻלָּכִים וכו' are a hyperbolic expression for the whole  
 Israelitish nation, and he says, “I saw the whole people of  
 Israel along with, that is, on the side of the youth next in  
 succession who is to succeed him i.e. the old king, and mur-  
 muring against him (the old king) in the words mentioned in  
 the two preceding verses.” Indeed the definite article הֵּ be-  
 fore מְהֻלָּכִים shews that it is part of the subject and not of  
 the predicate of the sentence; in other words that מְהֻלָּכִים  
 and עִם are not to be taken together. Mendlessohn does not  
 make the two preceding verses represent the murmurs of the  
 people at all, but according to his interpretation (which by the  
 way has very little point in it or connexion with what precedes  
 or follows it.) it is Solomon’s own sentiment, and he would

## THE EIGHTH SECTION.

17 שְׁמֵר הַגִּלְיוֹן בְּאֶשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ אֶל-בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים וְקָרָוּב  
לְשִׁמְעַ מִתַּת הַבְּסִילִים וְגַבַּח בִּי-אֵיגָם יוֹדְעִים לַעֲשׂוֹת

render טוֹב מִ-, "better off than," a meaning which it frequently bears in this book, but is not so common as "better than."

Ver. 16. "Indeed I have seen, (he says), that such is the "way of the people all along, that they dislike whatever they "have in their own times, and wish for new things every "morning, for they love change and alteration. The time "seems long to them, and it appears to them as if there was "no end or conclusion of all that they have in their own time; "for they are quite disgusted with it; but I have found that "posterity who will arise after them will not be any better "pleased with the new king, and will choose novelties for "themselves. But this too (popularity) is a mere breath and "windy notion, and there is no substantial happiness in the "honour and praise of the people." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The preposition לְ before כָּל-הָעָם denotes, "in the opinion of," "according to." In the idea of the people, there is no end, &c. לְפָנֵיהֶם means, "in their own time," as I have already observed at i. 10. בּוֹ means, in the new king.

Ver. 17. "He now begins to point out the desirable course "of action by means of which we may attain to true felicity,

## SECTIO OCTAVA.

- 17 Cohibe pedem tuum cum ædem Dei adis; et melius est accedere ad audiendum quam sacrificii-oblatio stultorum, quippe qui nesciant se malum

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“and eternal good. And he begins the subject with the service  
 “of God, observing that the fear of God should be upon thee  
 “continually, as is proper for one born of woman, who goes to  
 “pray before the presence of the King of kings, the Holy One,  
 “blessed be he. ‘And know,’ he says, ‘that the drawing near  
 “to hear the word of God is better and more acceptable than  
 “a fool’s sinning and offering a sacrifice to atone for it;’ for  
 “‘to hear is better than sacrifice,’ as the prophets have admo-  
 “nished Israel at length on this subject. ‘For they know not,  
 “&c.’ Here he is giving the reason for his expression in that  
 “he calls the sinner a fool; he says, it is clear that the sinner  
 “is foolish and ignorant, and that it is on that account that  
 “he does evil; for if he knew the difference between good  
 “and evil, he would choose the good. And our Rabbins of  
 “blessed memory have said, ‘that no man is a sinner unless  
 “there be working in him the spirit of fatuity,’ so that the  
 “sinner is rightly called a fool.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. “Keep thy foot.” This is either a metaphor taken from one who entering a palace is careful not to soil the gorgeous carpeting with his feet; or from one who walks carefully to avoid slipping or falling in a place where if not careful he is very liable to do so. The כרי on רגליך is יתיר, i. e. “the ‘ is superfluous.”



facere. Ne præceptis sis ore tuo, nec mens tua præ-  
 properet verbum coram Deo proferre; nam Deus  
 in cœlo est et tu in terrâ, quamobrem sint pauca  
 verba tua. Sicut enim venit (i. e. constat) som-  
 nium in multitudine negotiorum, ita et sermo stulti  
 in multitudine verborum. Quotiescunque vovebis 3  
 Deo votum, ne cuncteris id exsolvere; in stultis  
 enim nil *Deo* gratum est; quodcunque voveris ex-

לְשָׁמַע is both to hear the word of God from the mouth of  
 the priest, and to obey the commands of God, as in 1 Sam.  
 xv. 22, where he says, “To hearken is better than sacrifice,”  
 where “to hearken,” must mean, “to obey,” because this word  
 הִקְשִׁיב corresponds to it in the other clause, of which the second  
 is merely a poetic repetition in other words. Mendlessohn as well  
 as the other Rabbinical commentators understand טוֹב before  
 מִתֵּיב, and render the passage thus, “And (know that) to draw  
 near to hear is better than the sacrificing (זִבַּח) of fools,”  
 where, as Mendlessohn ingeniously observes, Solomon means by  
 “fools,” the wicked, and explains in the next clause why he  
 calls them so. This is decidedly preferable to the rendering  
 which must be adopted if קָרוֹב be taken in the sense of an  
 imperative, viz. “Accede potius ut audias quam ut sacrificium  
 offeras ritu stultorum,” as the phrase מִתֵּיב הַפְּסִילִים זִבַּח would  
 thus be very elliptical, whereas according to the former version  
 it signifies, “than fools’ offering sacrifice,” and קָרוֹב is put for  
 הַקְּרוֹבָה, “the drawing near.”

If קָרוֹב be used here as an imperative, there would probably  
 be, according to Hurwitz, an ellipsis of תִּקְרֹב immediately after  
 it.

Ver. 1. “He proceeds to admonish him who worships and  
 “prays, not to pray hastily or precipitately, but with due regu-

הָעֶלֶּה אֶל־תְּבִהֶל עַל־פִּיךָ וְלִבְךָ אֶל־יִמְהָר לְהוֹצִיא דְבָר 1  
 לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל־הָאָרֶץ  
 עַל־כֵּן יִהְיוּ דְבָרֶיךָ מְעֻטִּים : כִּי בֹא הַחֲלוֹם בְּרֹב 2  
 עֲנָן וְקוֹל פֶּסִיל בְּרֹב דְּבָרִים : כַּאֲשֶׁר תִּדְר נְדָר 3  
 לָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־תֵּאָחֵר לְשַׁלְמוֹ כִּי אֵין חֶפֶץ בְּפִסְלִים

“lation of mind, for that ‘God above sees thee, and hears thy  
 “words, and he is in heaven in the highest heights of loftiness,  
 “and thou upon earth; there is nothing lower than thee; there-  
 “fore thou must not multiply words without due regulation of  
 “mind, lest thou be endangered.’ ” Mendlessohn.

Ver. 2. “As it has been paraphrased, הִיכְמָא דַּתִּי חִלְמָא  
 “הִיכְמָא דַּתִּי חִלְמָא i. e. ‘Just as a dream comes  
 “upon the fancies of the heart with an accumulation of *different*  
 “matters,’ i. e. like the natural dream which is made up of  
 “many different subjects and thoughts, without order or ar-  
 “rangement, so the voice of a fool comes out of his mouth  
 “with a multitude of words by chance and at random, with-  
 “out connexion, arrangement, or conclusion.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The phrase בָּא בִּי means, “made its appearance  
 under (such a form,)” i. e. (in the present instance) “consists in  
 (it).” The voice of a fool means here his expressions in ad-  
 dressing the Almighty. וְ is here again a conjunction of com-  
 parison.

Ver. 3. “As I have commanded thee to keep watch over  
 “thy words, when thou art in the house of God; so it is ne-  
 “cessary that thou shouldest take heed in every place and at  
 “every time to remember his name; if thou vowest a vow to  
 “him, keep that which hath been uttered with thy mouth, for

4 אֵת אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְרֹךְ שְׁלָם : טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִדְרֹךְ מִשְׁתָּדוֹר  
 5 וְלֹא תִשְׁלָם : אֶל-תִּתֵּן אֶת-פִּיךָ לַחֲטִיָּא אֶת-בִּשְׂרָךְ  
 וְאֶל-תֹּאמַר לִפְנֵי הַמַּלְאָךְ כִּי שִׁגְגָה הִיא לָמָּה יִקְצֹף  
 6 הָאֱלֹהִים עַל-קוֹלְךָ וְחָבַל אֶת-מַעֲשֶׂה יָדֶיךָ : כִּי בָרַב  
 חֳלָמוֹת וְהַבָּלִים וּדְבָרִים הַרְבֵּה כִּי אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים

“there is nothing pleasing in fools who mutter responses and  
 “observe religious festivals, while their heart is not with them.”  
 Mendlessohn.

Ver. 4. “But know that abstaining from making vows is  
 “not sin; as it is said in the Talmud, ‘If thou refrain from  
 “vowing, thou wilt not be guilty of sin.”” Mendlessohn.

Ver. 5. “Why should thy mouth be productive of sin and  
 “wickedness in thyself, as it will be if thou dost not perform  
 “what thou hast spoken with thy mouth. And say not before  
 “הַמַּלְאָךְ, i. e. the messenger who comes to claim the eleemosy-  
 “nary offering which thou hast devoted in public, that the vow  
 “which thou hast vowed was a mistake. We may interpret  
 “‘לַחֲטִיָּא אֶת-בִּשְׂרָךְ,’ like ‘לַעֲנֹת אֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ,’ to afflict oneself,  
 “i. e. to fast. Why should God be provoked by what is ut-  
 “tered by thy lips, so that he should destroy the work of thy  
 “hands?” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. אֶל תִּתֵּן, “Do not permit.” So נָתַן is used Gen.  
 xx. 9, xxxi. 7, Numb. xxii. 13.

לַחֲטִיָּא is contracted for לַחֲטִיָּא הִיא, i. e. “that  
 it was a mistake,” “that you made the vow hastily and inconsiderately,  
 and now refuse to perform it.”

“Destroy the work, &c.” i. e. plague thee. Surely it is not  
 worth while to bring God’s judgments upon thee by the utterance

4 solvito. Melius est quod non voveas, quam quod  
 5 voveas et non exsolvas votum. Ne sinas os tuum  
 teipsum peccati reum facere, neque coram sacer-  
 dotis legato dicas “errorem id fuisse;” cur offensus  
 merâ voce tuâ Deus manuum tuarum opus de-  
 6 struat? Nam in multitudine somniorum et vanita-  
 tum verba quoque sint multa; at Deum timeto.

of a few thoughtless words. “Why should God be provoked?” i. e. “Why should you provoke God to plague you by a few careless words which you could so easily have suppressed?” Why should you involve your whole person in the guilt and consequences of sin, by the misuse of so small a member as the tongue?

Ver. 6. “He means, ‘In all those dreams and fancies and “many vain things which come up into thy imagination, be sure “thou fear God, and that his fear be always before thy eyes. “Then thou wilt escape harm.”’ Mendlessohn.

NOTE. רַב חַלְמוֹת וְהַבָּלִים means the ordinary and trifling affairs of the world, and Mendlessohn couples with this וְדְבָרִים הַרְבֵּה, “and the generality of matters.” “In all these thou shalt surely fear God, and have his fear always before your eyes,” כִּי being used as it constantly is by the Talmudists as a particle of confirmation, as in Gen. xliii. 10, “Unless we had loitered,” כִּי עַתָּה שָׁבְנוּ זֶה פַּעַמַּיִם, “surely we should now have returned this twice.” I am more inclined to render it thus, “In the multitude of dreamy and vain matters, the ordinary affairs of the world, words also may be multiplied, i. e. we may use a superfluity of words about them if we like;” literally, “words too are many;” or הַרְבֵּה may be taken to be the imperative to correspond with יָרָא, “Multiply words too *if you will*.”

Si pauperis oppressionem et perversionem judicii et 7  
 justitiæ in civitate videris, ne hanc rem mireris;  
 pollens enim super alium pollentem auctoritatem  
 tenet, et super hos pollentiores alii. Et excellentia 8  
 terræ in toto ejus constat; agri quoque domino

הִרְבֵּה, “multiply,” corresponding to רוֹב, “multitude;” and the rest will then be, “but fear thou God;” i. e. “but as for God, thou must not approach him with many words, but stand in awe of him.” This interpretation is far more in accordance with the accents than Mendlessohn’s; according to his rendering there would not have been any athnack (א) at all in the verse, and the zakeph would not have been over the word הִבְלִים, but over הִרְבֵּה.

Ver. 7. - “He here speaks with reference to those who “murmur against the political government and administration “of a state, who are mentioned above. If thou seest in a “state that sometimes they oppress the poor, and wrong the “man who has justice and right on his side, do not wonder “or feel surprise at this sight or at the king whose pleasure “thou mayest imagine this to be, for that otherwise he would “not remain an indifferent spectator when it is in his power to “prevent it. I say thou must not blame the king with it; for “in a state there is one great man in office above another to “superintend him, and each one in a rank higher only super- “intends the rank next below him, and so onwards from him. “And ‘there are great ones above them,’ i. e. to say, that the “great men all of them only superintend those men whom they “are immediately set over, those who are next below their rank “and degree: for such is the method of a regular administra- “tion, that each individual should have his own particular “charge; and it is impossible for him who is highest of all,



יָרָא : אִם-עֵשֶׁק רֹשׁ וְגֹל מִשְׁפָּט וְצָדֵק תִּרְאֶה  
 בְּמִדְיָנָה אֶל-תִּתְמָה עַל-הַחֲפִין כִּי גִבָּה מֵעַל גִּבָּה  
 שֹׁמֵר וְגִבְהִים עֲלֵיהֶם : וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶרֶץ בְּכָל הָיָא מִלְּךָ 8

“ viz. the king, to superintend every thing in detail which is  
 “ done under his government; but he leans for support on his  
 “ prime minister, and the prime minister on the princes, and  
 “ princes on the overseers, and so on from them. For super-  
 “ intendance of all things in detail belongs to God alone, who  
 “ fainteth not neither is wearied, which is not the case with  
 “ the mind of man. And accordingly you must not wonder if  
 “ the administration be not good in the highest degree in all  
 “ its details, nor free from every defect in all its parts. The  
 “ word גֹּל is in a state of construction, and the absolute form  
 “ might be the same; for substantives which have five points  
 “ (i. e. a tzere and a segol) when in the absolute form, are not  
 “ altered in construction. Thus we find Lev. vi. 24, וַחֲלֵב נִבְלָה  
 “ וַחֲלֵב טָרְפָה.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. חֲפִין merely means “matter,” “affair,” in this  
 place. The Jewish commentator only says that גֹּל might be  
 the absolute form as well as the constructive, without concluding  
 that it is exactly of the form חֲלֵב; for in reality its absolute  
 form is גֹּל, which we should have expected as having tzere  
 under the last syllable to suffer no change in construction, but  
 nevertheless becomes גִּל; and so we find חֲצֵר and זָקֵן changed  
 in construction, though these have also tzere under the ultimate.  
 שֹׁמֵר means here, “in office” or “authority.”

Ver. 8. “After first shewing that the king and princes are  
 “ not to be blamed because a government is not faultless in

# 9 לְשֶׁרָה נֶעְבֵּד : אֶהָב פָּסָף לֹא־יִשְׁבֵּעַ פָּסָף וּמִי־אֶהָב

“all its details, he proceeds to say that if you would ascertain  
 “the degree of excellence of a government, and how far one  
 “state excels another, you must not look at details; for that  
 “the excellence of a country consists in the entire state of it;  
 “the superiority of it is exhibited in its general administration  
 “and management, not in details; for it is impossible that  
 “all these should be in complete perfection, as is known to  
 “every intelligent man. He says, מֶלֶךְ לְשֶׁרָה נֶעְבֵּד, as much  
 “as to say, ‘It is clearly impossible for a king to do all the  
 “business of an administration alone, without help from his  
 “princes and his servants, and on that account the great must  
 “necessarily be set one above another in office. Is not the  
 “owner of a field, who is only king over a field of agricul-  
 “tural produce, served by others who do his pleasure? and it is  
 “not possible for him to do without other labourers, or by him-  
 “self, and how much less for a great king who rules over large  
 “provinces, and a strong people?’ It is clearly impossible that  
 “his eyes should overlook every thing at once, as Jethro  
 “says in his advice to Moses. We find elsewhere מֶלֶךְ with a לְ,  
 “as מֶלֶךְ לְמוֹאָב, ‘king of Moab.’ And there is nothing strange  
 “in the word מֶלֶךְ being applied to the owner of a field instead  
 “of בַּעַל; for so we find with regard to Araunah, that the Scrip-  
 “ture calls him הַמֶּלֶךְ, ‘the owner,’ ‘landlord,’ ‘all these did  
 “Araunah, the owner, give to the king,’ and besides that it  
 “was usual in ancient times, for a man who presided over the  
 “tillage of a field to be called by the title ‘King of the field,’  
 “and to carry a staff in his hand after the manner of a regal  
 “sceptre, as we find in the ancient poets.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. בַּבֵּל הִיא. The Keri on הִיא is הָיָא. The ante-  
 cedent of this, as masculine, would necessarily be יִתְרוֹן, whereas

9 inserviunt alii. Qui amat argentum non argento satiabitur; et qui gaudet turbâ (satellitum), nullus erit

that of **היא** would be **אָרֶץ**. With the reading **היא** of the Chethib the translation is, "The excellence of a land consists in the whole of it," literally "all it;" for **כָּל** must then be an adjective, since, if it were a substantive and in construction with **היא**, we should not have had **בְּכָל** (which is a contraction for **בְּהַכָּל**), but **בְּכָל**, (because a noun in a state of construction never has **ה** prefixed). With the **היא** of the Keri, **יִתְרוֹן אָרֶץ** must stand as a nominative absolute, and the translation be, "As for the excellence of a land, it (**היא**) consists in the whole (land)," literally, "in all (the land)," or, "in the entire state," "in the sum total;" in the first case **בְּכָל** being supposed to stand for **בְּאָרֶץ הַכָּל**, and in the second **כָּל** being taken as a substantive, and to mean, "the whole," "the sum total." Mendlessohn adopts the reading of the Chethib, for he writes the word **היא** in his commentary, probably because this gives the more simple and unbroken construction, the general sense being the same with either reading. There are however grammatical objections to the reading of the Chethib which do not apply to the Keri, and which must have induced the Masorites to preserve the latter. In the first place, the usual method of expressing "in the whole of it," would have been **בְּכֻלָּהּ**, (which is a contraction for **בְּכָל הָיָא** or **בְּכָל-הָיָא**, the affix being substituted for the pronoun **היא**, and **כָּל** or **כֹּל** which is a substantive in construction with **היא** being changed into **כָּל** with a dagesh in the **ל** to compensate for the shortening of the vowel). (Similar forms to **בְּכֻלָּהּ** are **כֻּלָּהּ**, "the whole of it" (Egypt), at Ezek. xxix. 2, and **כֻּלְּךָ**, "the whole of thee," at Mic. ii. 12). And in the second place, if this ordinary form be discarded, and **היא** is to be written at full length, and **כָּל** to be used as an adjective,

illi ex eâ proventus; quare hæc quoque vana est. Cum incremento opulentiæ increscunt quoque qui 10 eam consumant; et quis inde domino ejus fructus est præter oculorum suorum visum? Dulcis est 11 laborantis servi somnus sive parum sive multum comederit; at divitis satietas non ei permittit dor-

the correct form to express "in all (of) it," would be בְּהִיא הַכֹּל, for an adjective with an article prefixed to it always follows the noun substantive, and therefore, by analogy, the pronoun, with which it agrees.

Some have rendered the latter clause of this verse, "The king is served by means of the field," i. e. "The king is nothing without his country." Others, "that the king be enslaved, as it were, and devoted to the field," i. e. "to the agricultural interest," translating the first clause thus, "The excellence or prosperity of a land consists entirely in this, &c." But both these renderings are contrary to the accents, by which מֶלֶךְ and לְשָׂדֶה are closely united, but separated from נֶעֱבֵד. The literal rendering of the latter clause is, "Agri quoque dominus inser-vitur."

מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֶה, "Owner of a field." As other instances of לְ used merely as a sign of the genitive case, see מֶזְמֶר לְדָוִד in the headings of the Psalms, מֶזְמֶר לְשִׁלְמֹה, and verse 11 of this chapter, where we have שָׂבַע לְעֵשִׂיר, "the satiety of a rich man;" and Daniel i. 1, בְּשָׁנָה שְׁלוֹשׁ לְמַלְכוּת יְהוֹיָקִים, "In the third year of Jehoiakim, &c."

Ver. 9. "He speaks in blame of the love of money and "rank, and says, 'He who loves money cannot eat that "money, or be satisfied with it. And he who likes to have "about him a retinue of men-servants and maid-servants to "wait upon him, sets his mind on a thing which cannot yield "him any profit.' This is the meaning of לֹא תְבִיאָה, 'There is

בְּהִמּוֹן לֹא תִבּוּאָה גַם־זֶה הִבֵּל : בְּרִבּוֹת הַטּוֹבָה 10  
 רָבוּ אוֹכְלֶיהָ וּמִה־כְּשָׁרוֹן לְבַעְלֶיהָ כִּי אִם־רְאִיתִי  
 עֵינָיו : מִתּוֹקָה שְׁנַת הָעֵבֶר אִם־מָעַט וְאִם־הִרְבָּה 11

“no profit.” Every thing which man gains and earns by labour “is called תִּבּוּאָה. He will have no reward and no profit from “this retinue, so that that too is a vain expectation; as he says “in conclusion.” Mendlessohn.

אָהָב with בִּי seems to be either, “takes delight in,” or as Mendlessohn renders it, “loves to be in,” “to be surrounded by,” &c.

NOTE. לֹא תִבּוּאָה, “Non proventus erit illi.” Supply תִּבּוּאָה from תִּבּוּאָה לוֹ.

Ver. 10. “If a man who loves a retinue have an accession “of wealth and property, he will have to procure more men and “women servants, and a household, and then the number of “those who live on it will be increased; and thus there will be “no advantage for himself, but ‘the looking on.’ For since the “property is his, while others live on it, he has no good from “it except the pleasure of looking on.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The Masorites read for רְאִיתִי עֵינָיו, רְאוֹת עֵינָיו, “The looking on of his eyes,” i. e. his pleasure in contemplating the comfort of the dependants who are fed at his expense.

Here we have בַּעֲלֶיהָ followed by עֵינָיו, just as in verse 12 of this chapter we have בַּעֲלָיו followed by לְרַעְתּוֹ, which are instances of the use of בַּעֲלִים in the sense of “a single owner.” בַּעַל in construction in the singular is generally used to denote a person of the quality denoted by the following word, as בַּעַל אֵף, “an angry man,” בַּעַל עוֹף, “a winged creature.” For other instances of בַּעֲלִים, “an owner,” vid. Is. i. 3, Exod. xxi. 29, 34, 36, xxii. 16, 11, &c.



12 יֵאָכֵל וְהִשָּׁבַע לַעֲשִׂיר אֵינָנו מְנִיחַ לוֹ לִישׁוֹן : יֵשׁ  
 רָעָה חוֹלָה רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עֹשֶׂה שָׁמֹר לְבַעֲלָיו  
 13 לְרַעְתּוֹ : וְאֶבֶר הָעֹשֶׂה הָהוּא בָּעֲנִין רָע וְהוֹלִיד בֶּן  
 14 וְאֵין בִּידּוֹ מְאוֹמָה : כִּפְאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם  
 יָשׁוּב לְלֶכֶת בְּשָׂבָא וּמְאוֹמָה לֹא-יִשָּׂא בְּעַמְלּוֹ שִׁילָךְ  
 15 בִּידּוֹ : וְגַם-זֶה רָעָה חוֹלָה כָּל-עֲמֶת שָׂבָא בֶּן יִלָּךְ

Ver. 11. "Behold, happier than he is the slave who  
 "works all day, and from his being faint and tired lies down  
 "and falls asleep, and his sleep is sweet to him. But the rich  
 "man cannot sleep, for his satiety and the abundance of his  
 "luxury suffer him not to rest." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Observe here, that we have another parallel case  
 to מִלֵּךְ לְשָׂדֶה, as meaning owner of a field. The accents shew  
 decisively here, as in that case, that שָׂבַע לַעֲשִׂיר means, "the  
 satiety of a rich man," and that the sentence cannot be con-  
 strued, "But satiety does not permit to a rich man to sleep."  
 Besides in this case לוֹ would be redundant.

Ver. 12, 13. " 'There is a sore evil,' i. e. sometimes the  
 "wealth alone, because it suffers him not to sleep; and some-  
 "times it may have been kept for him to his own hurt, because  
 "it may perish through the design of a man of evil practices  
 "who plunders by night, or of a robber who strikes him a mortal  
 "blow, so that he dies in consequence of his wealth, and the son  
 "whom he has begot has nothing left of his father's property.

"חֹלָה is a participle from root חָלָה, "to be sick," or else it  
 "is an adjective of form טוֹבָה, from the root חוּל, with the sense

12 mire. Est malum ægritudine afficiens (*sive* in-  
cidens) quod sub sole vidi, divitiæ domino suo in  
13 ipsius damnum servatæ; quum perditæ sint istæ  
divitiæ casu quodam adverso, et filio quem genuit  
14 nihil prorsus sit in manu; quod quemadmodum  
egressus est ex utero matris suæ nudus iterum  
rediturus sit sicut venerit, nec quicquam prorsus  
labore suo acquisiverit quod secum auferat in manu.  
15 Hoc quoque *dico* est malum ægritudine afficiens  
(*vel* incidens) quod omnino sicut venerit ita sit

“ of that word in the passage יְחִילוּ עַל רֹאשׁ, ‘They shall light  
“(fall) on the head’ (of Joab), in which case רָעָה הוֹלָה would  
“ mean, ‘an evil lighting on the sons of men,’ or ‘incident to  
“ them.’ ” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. רָעָה הוֹלָה is literally, “malum ægrum,” “a sickly  
evil,” “a disease;” and here, spoken of moral condition, “an  
error,” “a defect:” thus vi. 2, חָלִי רָע, “ægritudo mala.” In  
both 12 and 15 a great error of judgment and practice is de-  
noted. Here again the Masora mentions the reading עֲנִין for  
עֲנִין, which would give the meaning “through the designs and  
practices of a villain.”

Ver. 14. NOTE. There is an evident quotation here from  
Job i. 21, where the very same Hebrew words occur.

נָשָׂא means here, “To take or receive,” in the sense of  
acquiring.

שִׁילָה, “Which he may cause to go away,” i. e. “which he  
may carry away.” This is a contracted form for שִׁילָהֶךָ. This  
verse is part of the sentence beginning with verse 12, and is  
descriptive of the sore evil which he says he had noticed.

Ver. 15. “And this too would be a sore evil, even if the  
“ property is not destroyed and dissipated through the design

abiturus; et quid ergo prodest ei quod in ventum laboret? quodque omnibus diebus suis in tenebris 16

“of a villain, that he should have no son, for then in every “respect as he came so he will go.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. כָּל-עֵצָה. Kimchi and the Rabbinic commentators (vid. the מְלוֹת), and after them Buxtorf consider that this is an anomaly and that the regular form would have been כָּל־עֵצָה (after the form מְלֵעֵצָה הַבִּטָּן, 1 Kings vii. 20, “In the quarter of and corresponding to the projection.”) This would certainly have been a more satisfactory reading; in the first place, because we should thus have had the prefix כָּ, “as,” (which is changed into כִּ before another letter with sheva) to answer to כֵּן, “so,” at the beginning of the other member of the sentence; and in the next place, because עֵצָה never occurs without הֵ, and with this prefix denotes, like נִנְךָ, “exact correspondence in position and dimensions,” (as at Eccl. vii. 14, infra,) so that כָּל־עֵצָה would have the same sense as כִּנְךָ, “exactly as,” (vid. Gen. ii. 18, where כִּנְךָ means, “exactly to match him, and to correspond with his tastes and desires.”) As an explanation however of the present reading, I would suggest that כָּל-עֵצָה שֶׁ- may be a euphonic contraction for כָּל־לְעֵצָה שֶׁ-, and signify, “altogether corresponding to the way in which,” i. e. “exactly as,” like כָּל-עוֹד, Job xxvii. 3, “All the time that,” i. e. “as long as,” and לְעֵצָה may answer to כֵּן, like “as” to “so,” and therefore preclude the necessity of a preceding כָּ, which indeed we do not always find, as in Hos. xi. 2, Jud. v. 15.

I think that Mendlessohn’s idea on this verse, that Solomon intended by speaking of “the man’s going as he came,” particularly to allude to his having no son, must be allowed to be somewhat far-fetched. It seems more likely that no new

וּמַה-יִתְרוֹן לוֹ שֶׁיֵּעַמַּל לְרוּחַ : גַּם כָּל-יָמָיו בַּחֹשֶׁךְ 16

case is introduced here, but that Solomon is merely recapitulating what he had just said, that it is a sore evil for a man to carry nothing away with him after all his labour in this life, or in other words, to leave it as he came.

Ver. 16. “‘I have noticed among men one who all his ‘days eats in the dark;’ for the principal meal of the ancients ‘was in the evening, and luxurious persons ate this meal in ‘the company of their acquaintance, with lights and torches ‘burning; whereas this niggardly person eats by himself in the ‘dark, and is full of fear and faint-heartedness. ‘And should ‘suffer vexation, and illness, and peevishness should be upon ‘him.’ It is known by experience, that he who suffers much ‘vexation falls into sickness, and that the sick man is more ‘easily vexed than one in sound health. Consequently he says, ‘‘I have found among men one who suffers much vexation, and ‘I have also noticed the illness which has consequently taken hold ‘on him, and the peevishness (which is a farther degree than ‘vexation,) which he has contracted in consequence of that illness.’ כָּעַם is a verb præterite, because the first syllable has ‘a kametz, and the second a pathack.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Again, instead of supposing here the introduction of a fresh instance of mistaken principle and conduct, I prefer to regard the whole of this verse as included under the phrase in the preceding verse, מַה יִתְרוֹן שָׁׁׁ; “What profit then is it, that he should labour for wind, and eat in the dark?” i. e. “in gloomy and moody parsimony?” Or again, we may include it all under זֶה רָעָה הוֹלָה, “This is a sore evil that he should go in all respects as he came, and yet should torment and vex himself through life to no purpose,” considering וּמַה יִתְרוֹן וכו', and the whole of verse 16, in parenthesis. But the former rendering, which I have adopted in the translation, is the more simple.

17 יֹאכֵל וְכַעַס הָרַבָּה וְחָלִיו וְקֶצֶף : הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר-רָאִיתִי  
 אֲנִי טוֹב אֲשֶׁר-יָפָה לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה  
 בְּכָל-עֲמָלֹו, שִׁיעֵמַל תַּחַת-הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מִסָּפֶר יְמֵי-חַיו אֲשֶׁר-  
 18 נָתַן-לֹו הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי-הוּא חָלָקוֹ : גַּם כָּל-הָאָדָם

Aben Ezra ingeniously explains his eating in the dark by saying, that he is so busy all day that he has not leisure to eat till night. Rather it is a poetic description of the anxiety which torments him even at his meals, (which ought to be taken cheerfully), which together with vexation brings on illness, and consequent peevishness. וְכַעַס הָרַבָּה, “And that he should suffer much vexation.”

חָלִיו, as Rosenmuller well observes, is for חָלִי לוֹ, “Et ægritudo sit ei,” just as in Psal. cxv. 7, we have יִרְיֶהֻם for יָרִים לָהֶם.

וְקֶצֶף, “Et ira sit ei,” לוֹ is to be supplied from the preceding word חָלִיו.

Mendlessohn in this place, as in one or two others, seems a little to forget the dignity of scriptural poetry. He interprets יֹאכֵל בְּחֶשֶׁךְ, of the miser who will not afford to eat his supper by candle-light, but eats it in the dark out of parsimony; “the principal meal being in the evening with the ancients.” This is frivolous, as is likewise his interpretation of the words, “that they may have a good reward for their labour,” which I have already noticed. “Aliquando bonus dormitat.”

Ver. 17. “‘This then is that which is truly good, and “which is truly excellent, &c.;’ that is to say, that ‘if substance “and treasures are the proper good of man, it can only be by “eating and drinking and seeing good done among others by “means of all his labour which he performs under the sun, i. e.



comedat, multumque vexetur, et ægritudo sit ei et  
 17 morositas? En igitur quod bonum ego quod pul-  
 chrum esse vidi *hoc est*, quod comedat quisque et  
 bibat et bonum videat effectum ex omni labore suo  
 quo sub sole fungitur per *totum* numerum vitæ  
 suæ dierum quos Deus ei concessit, quippe qui  
 18 *solus* ei sit fructus *laboris sui*. *Vidi* etiam quod

“by being happy himself, and making others happy, for that is  
 “his real profit from it, not to heap up wealth and collect riches,  
 “which may perish through the design of a villain, or which  
 “he may leave to posterity; for in this there is no substantial  
 “good for man.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. טוב אשר יפה. Michaelis takes אשר here to be  
 merely a ‘copulative conjunction, and renders it, “good and  
 fair,” referring to Jer. xvi. 14, אשר לא איתן לכם חנינה, “And  
 I will shew you no pity,” which may be rendered, “inasmuch  
 as I will shew you no pity;” and (more to his point), Hosea xii. 8,  
 “Ephraim said, They shall not find in me אשר חטא,” “evil  
 and sin,” “evil which is also sin;” and here he would translate  
 “the good thing, which is also the fair or excellent thing.” I  
 have rendered the verse as if ראיתי were understood after the  
 second אשר, and so avoided this awkwardness of construction.

Mendlessohn explains לראות טובה, “to enjoy the happiness  
 of oneself and others,” not “to enjoy prosperity,” as some  
 translate it. The words may bear the latter sense; but Men-  
 dlessohn’s interpretation is more consistent with a sentiment  
 already expressed in iii. 12, that “there is nothing good for  
 man except to be cheerful, and at the same time to do good;”  
 טובה means either “prosperity,” i. e. “one’s own happiness,”  
 or “kindness,” i. e. “the promotion of the happiness of others.”  
 In this instance it seems to unite these two meanings. For the  
 use of ראה see note at vi. 6. כי הוא חלקו means, “for this is  
 all the profit he can derive from it (his labour).”

ad hominem cui dederit Deus opes et divitias, et copiam fecerit de illis comedendi et fructum *illum* suum capiendi et in labore suo lætandi, hoc *ei* donum Dei esse. Reminiscatur enim *quisque* non 19 multos esse dies vitæ suæ, sed cordis sui lætitiæ Deum respondere.

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Ver. 18. “ ‘But if God has given him wealth and riches, “and bestowed therewith the power and ability to eat of them,’ “(as he said before), ‘and obtain real profit from them, which “is to benefit others, and to see the good done of which it is “said in the preceding verse that it is his portion in life for “the world to come, and thus to rejoice in his labour with an “everlasting joy; all this is clearly from the hand of God;’ for “unless a man possess the power and ability to derive enjoyment “from his possessions and to do good with them, he may have “‘wealth which would only be injurious,’ as it is expressed elsewhere.

“וְזֶה is here again used for וְזֶה.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. In this verse and the preceding he is stating in fact exactly the same conclusion which he has before expressed in different words; viz. first, that what is best for man is to enjoy cheerfully the good things of this life, and exercise liberality to others, and secondly, that wherever a man is enabled by the possession of wealth, health, &c. to do so, and to make the right profit from the fruits of his labour, viz. to use them to do good to others, this is the free gift of God, and must be a matter of devout thankfulness to Him. Life is short, and therefore ought to be made the most of; and consequently if he have the power and inclination to make himself and others happy, he may be sure that these are given him by God.

וְזֶה, as Mendlessohn has shewn, is here (18) the same as in (17) “his right and proper profit from his labour,” viz. to do good to others as well as to himself with the fruits of it.

וְזֶה is the infinitive from וָזָה, “tollere,” “accipere.”

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׁר וּנְכָסִים וְהַשְׁלִיטוֹ לֶאֱכֹל  
 מִמֶּנּוּ וּלְשָׂאת אֶת-חִלְקוֹ וּלְשִׂמְחָה בְּעֵמְלוֹ זֶה מַתַּת  
 אֱלֹהִים הִיא : בִּי לֹא הִרְבָּה יוֹזֵר אֶת-יָמַי חַיִּיו בִּי 19  
 הָאֱלֹהִים מַעֲנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לְבוֹ :

Ver. 19. "Let him remember the days of his life that they are not many, that the days of man are short, and his wants few; and why then should he heap up to no profit? And he states that God responds in every respect to his cheerfulness and approves of it and gives him His consent; for He grants him wealth and substance and power to do with them as is good in his eyes, (for 'he who desires to purify himself is always assisted from heaven,')" (Bab. Talmud, Treatise Yomah, Sect. III), "and removes from him all those circumstances of constraint which might prevent him from accomplishing his wishes." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The common rendering of the first part of this verse, "(ille qui illo dono Dei præditus est) non multum recordabitur dierum vitæ suæ," is not in accordance with the accents which disjoin הִרְבָּה from יוֹזֵר; besides it would be very strange that forgetfulness of the past should be spoken of as a great blessing.

Buxtorf renders מַעֲנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לְבוֹ "respondet, annuit lætitiæ cordis ejus," considering the use of the verb יַעֲנֶה with בִּי to be a phrase. Rosenmuller instances the passages in which, when God is said to answer by means of fire, or in some other way, this construction is used, and translates "God answers him (as to his enquiries after happiness,) by giving him cheerfulness of heart." Mendlessohn seems inclined to render it, "furnishes him with all the means of enjoyment in his enjoyment, and thus expresses His consent to it and approbation of it," because

## THE NINTH SECTION.

CHAP.  
VI.

1 יֵשׁ רָעָה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ וְרַבָּה הִיא  
 2 עַל-הָאָדָם: אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן-לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂר וְנַכְסִים  
 וְכָבוֹד וְאִינוֹנו חֶסֶד לְנַפְשׁוֹ, מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִתְּאֲזָה וְלֹא-  
 יִשְׁלִיטֵנוּ הָאֱלֹהִים לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי אִישׁ נָכָרִי יֶאֱכֹלֵנוּ

*מַעֲנָה* is in the Hiphil, and therefore means, “causing to furnish,” “granting that which grants,” whereas in the sentence “God gives him corn and wine and wealth which give him enjoyment,” the word “give” might be expressed in both cases by the Kal of *עָנָה*, as we find it used in Ps. LXV. 6, “Terrible signs hast thou granted us, O God,” and in Eccles. x. 9, “Money that furnishes (imparts) every thing.” The general sense of Mendlessohn’s rendering is the same as that of Buxtorf’s, and I have adopted it in preference to Rosenmuller’s in the Version.

Ver. 1, 2. “He here repeats the words of an objector “against the providence and judgments of God, and mentions “this instance in particular of an unsatisfactory state of things “in the world, that sometimes God gives wealth and riches and “honour to a man, so that if he choose he would not be in “want of any thing for himself of all that he could desire, but “nevertheless he has no profit from his possessions, but leaves

## SECTIO NONA.

CAP.  
VI.

1 “Est autem malum quod vidi sub sole frequens  
2 hominibus superincumbere; nempe quod cui largia-  
tur Deus divitias et opes et honorem, adeo ut nullâ  
prorsus careat omnium quas rerum cupiverit, non  
eidem copiam faciat Deus illis vescendi, sed alienus  
vescatur illis: hoc irrita res (*sive* hujus vitæ im-

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“his substance and treasures to others whom he did not beget,  
“but who may be called strangers to him, as those from whom  
“he has never received any benefit in the world. ‘Is not this,’  
“he says, ‘a sad defect in our condition?’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. רַבָּה means “numerous,” “general,” “extensive;” the  
latter is probably the sense here. “It prevails over men exten-  
sively;” “it is very common in the world;” as Rosenmüller renders  
the passage, “Und ist gemein bei den Menschen.” וְאֵינֶנּוּ חָסֵר  
לְנַפְשׁוֹ literally, “And he is in want of, wants nothing for him-  
self of all that he desires,” i. e. “all whose wants are supplied.”  
It is remarkable that Solomon has already applied the same  
phrases רַבָּה רָעָה and חֹלָה רָעָה to the same case, viz. that  
of a man who acquires wealth by hard toil, and never lives to  
enjoy it, except that for the phrase חֹלָה רָעָה, “a sore evil,”  
or “a prevailing evil incident to mankind,” he here uses חָלִי רָע,  
“a bad sore or disease,” which when spoken of “a moral de-  
fect in the constitution of the world,” as in this case, where the  
Preacher is detailing the murmurs of objectors against divine



perfectio) est et malum vitium. Si gignat hic centum, et anni *ejus* sint multi, et dies annorum sint plurimi, sed ipse nunquam opulentiâ *istâ* perfruatur neque exequiæ sint ei, abortivum eo beatius esse prædicarem; quippe quod frustra nascatur, et obscure efferatur, et cujus nomen obscuritate obruatur;

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providence, means a "bad or serious defect." The sense is analogous to that of הֶבֶל as used here and in other passages of this book preceding and following, where it is applied to certain circumstances in the constitution of the world and its inhabitants, (as implying something apparently "futile," "unsatisfactory," and in fact, "a moral difficulty which cannot be solved,") and always in a querulous or sceptical spirit, which is afterwards removed by more just reasoning and more enlarged views afterwards developed, as in the present chapter. In such cases I have chosen to render הֶבֶל, "an unsatisfactory thing." The occurrence in this verse of the word חֵלִי, which must mean "a moral disease or defect," renders "ægrum," "ægritudine afficiens," the most probable translation of the word חֵלָה above, where "a sickly evil," "a malady," as applied to a man's moral condition, would mean as it does here a defect in that condition.

Ver. 3. "And though his treasures be great all the days of his life, while yet his mind is never satisfied with what he longs for, happiness, because he does not enjoy his prosperity himself, or do good to others, and neither benefits himself or others with what God has bestowed upon him, and besides has no honourable burial or good name, I pronounced the untimely birth to be better off than he.

מֵאָה. It is usual in poetry to speak of a collection of things by the names of even numbers, as a thousand, a hundred, twenty, instead of using uneven numbers." Mendlesohn.

וְהַבֶּל וְחַלִּי רָע הוּא : אִם-יֹלִיד אִישׁ מֵאָה וְשָׁנִים 3  
 רַבּוֹת יִחְיֶה וְרַב שְׁיֵחֵי וְיָמֵי-שָׁנָיו וְנַפְשׁוֹ לֹא-תִשָּׁבַע  
 מִן-הַטּוֹבָה וְגַם-קְבוּרָה לֹא-הִיְתָה לוֹ אֲמַרְתִּי טוֹב  
 מִמָּנוּ הַנָּפֵל : כִּי-בַהֶבֶל בָּא וּבַחֲשָׁךְ יֵלֶךְ וּבַחֲשָׁךְ 4

NOTE. With מֵאָה supply יָלִיד from יֹלִיד.

We have here again in the words "וְשָׁנִים רַבּוֹת יִחְיֶה וכו'" the same indifference that I already pointed out about using the singular or plural of the verb הָיָה, respecting a collection of things.

וְנַפְשׁוֹ, "While yet his appetite has not full enjoyment of the prosperity," i. e. the prosperity and blessings described in the preceding verse. נַפְשׁוֹ is here put for the man himself, his powers of enjoyment for "himself." The ו before נַפְשׁוֹ means, "while yet," or "yet since."

"No honourable burial is his," because his wealth has prematurely fallen into the hands of a stranger.

נָפֵל abortivum quia נָפֵל mortuum ex utero instar immaturi fructûs. The objector is here picturing the hapless lot of the man within whose reach God seems to have placed happiness, but who yet is denied the enjoyment of it. In the end of the last verse חָלִי, "sickness," is a verbal from חָלָה, "to be sick," just as דָּמִי, "quietness," in Ps. LXXXIII. 2, is from דָּמָה, "to be quiet."

Ver. 4. "For the untimely birth comes in vain, as it is "here in vain, without suffering any pain, or bearing chastisement, for it feels nothing; and it departs in darkness, and has "never seen happiness or wished for it; and its name is concealed in the dark; and it leaves no fame or remembrance in "the earth." Mendlessohn.

Ver. 5. "And in this respect too the abortion is happier

5 שְׁמוֹ יִכָּפֶה : גַּם-שֶׁמֶשׁ לֹא-רָאָה וְלֹא יָדַע נִחַת לָזֶה

6 מִזֶּה : וְאֵלֹה חַיָּה אֵלָּף שָׁנִים בְּפַעֲמִים וְטוֹבָה לֹא

7 רָאָה הֵלֵא אֶל-מָקוֹם אַחֵר הַכֹּל הוֹלֵךְ : כָּל-עֵמֶל

“than he, that it hath never seen or known the sun of prosperity so as to long for it; whereas he is longing all his life “for greater prosperity than he has, and does not attain it, and “so has no rest, and his desire is sickening to his heart, and “fatal to his soul. The untimely birth has more tranquillity “than the rich man who has no power to use his wealth.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. To render שֶׁמֶשׁ, “the sun of prosperity,” gives indeed a good sense, but seems rather forced. The latter half of the verse is literally, “There is more tranquillity to this than to that;” i. e. to the abortion than to the rich man, because it sees nothing of the troubles of life. The Hebrew is abrupt; but we may supply “so that” before נִחַת, “Besides it has never seen or known the sun, so that it has more tranquillity than he.”

Ver. 6. NOTE. When he comes to the end of his life, even if it have been a long one, since he has not enjoyed his prosperity, he is no better off than the abortion; both are at the end of their earthly existence, and neither have had any enjoyment.

טוֹבָה לֹא רָאָה. I have said at ch. v. 17, that טוֹבָה means either “prosperity,” i. e. “one’s own happiness,” or “kindness,” i. e. “the promotion of the happiness of others,” and that it seems there to bear a double sense. Its meaning here must be the same as in vi. 3, and therefore restricted to the former, “prosperity.” So it is used in Ps. cvi. 5. It often means the “Divine kindness to man,” as in Ps. lxxv. 11, lxxxvi. 17, Neh. v. 19. In Ps. xvi. 2, its sense is ambiguous; “Thou hast said

5 quodque solem etiam nec viderit nec noverit, ita ut  
 6 major est huic quam illi quies (*sive* tranquillitas);  
 et etiamsi mille iterumque annos vixerit, neque  
 prosperitate *quâ potitus sit* tamen fruitus sit; nonne  
 7 abit uterque in eundem locum. Omnis est usque  
 labor hominum gulæ suæ causâ; ita et mens (hu-

(O my soul) to Jehovah, ‘Thou art my Lord, my prosperity (or ‘my kindness,’ i. e. ‘He who is kind to me’); there is none that surpasses thee. As for the holy in the land and the excellent, all my delight is in them.’” Such is the rendering agreeably with the accents. Here and in verse 3, as well as in v. 17, רָאָה has the same meaning as in the phrase רֵאָה חַיִּים at ix. 9, viz. “to enjoy,” in which sense it is usually followed by בְּ.

The מְקוֹם אֶחָד is of course “the grave.” Here again we have הַכֹּל in the sense of “both.”

Ver. 7. “לְפִירוֹ, that is, ‘for the sake of his mouth,’ that “it may be satisfied with food; and this is never finally effected “all his life long; and just so his mind never attains its desires, “for they are great and without end. תַּמְלֵא; when the mind “attains all its wishes and desires, it is said to be satisfied, or “literally ‘filled.’ As we find in Exod. xv. 9, תַּמְלֵאמוּ נַפְשֵׁי, “‘my mind shall be satisfied with them, i. e. with defeating “and plundering them.”” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The objector here suggests another ground of repining against the condition of mankind on earth, viz. that just as man devotes all his bodily labour to secure himself a supply for his bodily appetites, and continues all his life to do so, like the individual described above, as though they could never be furnished with a sufficient supply, so his mind can never satisfy itself with intellectual acquirements. The conjunction וְ is here one of comparison. הַנֶּפֶשׁ used here in the abstract means

mana) nunquam satiatur. Quænam est in hæc re 8  
 sapienti stulti præstantia? quid docto prodest pau-  
 peri quod contra vitam grassetur? (sive luctetur?)  
 Melior est visus oculorum excursionem mentis; hæc 9

“the mind of man.” He thus repines at the unsatisfactoriness of the accumulation of knowledge as well as of wealth.

Ver. 8. “He proceeds with the words of the objector. “For what advantage, &c.; i. e. what necessary advantage? “that is, allowing that the wise man has some advantage over “the fool, this can be only if they are equal in their condition “in this life; but what does the intelligent poor man effect “who acquires great and glorious stores of knowledge, while “he continues poor and destitute? What good is it to him to “struggle against life, i. e. to seek only those things which are “adverse and prejudicial to the life of man, never to be merry “or indulge himself nor to eat or drink enough to satisfy his “appetite, but to be always storing his mind with the diso-  
 “veries of philosophy?” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I am inclined to explain the verse in this way. What advantage in this respect has the wise and well-informed man over the fool, i. e. the ignorant man? i. e. What advantage has he over the fool as to the satisfactoriness of his pursuits, (spoken of in the last verse)? Does the intelligent poor man, who is always pursuing literary researches, and struggling against mental and external difficulties at the same time, derive satisfaction from those researches? He says, “The learned poor man,” because his case affords the means of making observation on the satisfactoriness of mental possessions by themselves, and complains that this is no greater than that of the possession of worldly wealth. The Septuagint renders לְהִלָּךְ נֶגֶד הַחַיִּים in a way which seems to coincide with Mendlessohn’s interpreta-



הָאָדָם לְפִיָּהּ וְגַם-הִנֵּפֶשׁ לֹא תִמְלָא : כִּי מֵהַיּוֹתֵר 8  
 לְחֵכָם מִן-הַכֶּסֶּל מֵהַלְעֵנִי יוֹדֵעַ לְהִלָּךְ נֶגֶד הַחַיִּים :  
 טוֹב מֵרֵאָה עֵינַיִם מִהִלָּךְ-נֶפֶשׁ גַּם-זֶה הַבָּל וְרַעוּת 9

tion, viz. *πορευθῆναι κατενάντι τῆς ζωῆς*, though Desveux pronounces it to be “absolute nonsense.” It means, “that advancement in knowledge which involves a struggle against all the difficulties which nature and the circumstances and conditions of human life throw in its way.” The word *הִלָּךְ* here is well expressed by the Latin, “grassari,” “incedere.” Mendlessohn mentions this passage among the “contradictions discussed in the latter part of his Preface,” (vid. page 86), and refers to his Commentary. At page 81, he speaks of the “wisdom” here alluded to as rather religious than scientific. The Rabbinic commentators remark that *יֹדֵעַ* is intransitive here, and that it is separated by the accent zakeph (:) from the following word, so that it is joined as an adjective with *עֵינַי*, and is equivalent to *הָכֶם*.

Ver. 9. “He goes on to say in the words of the objector, “‘Is not that which the eyes see clearly and sensibly better for man than all that the mind struggles after in dark thoughts and secret reflections, which have nothing substantial in them and do not come under the perception of the senses but are “a mere breath and windy notion?’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. “Better than the vain struggles of the mind are even the possessions of worldly wealth, which you can see and call your own. This too, *הִלָּךְ-נֶפֶשׁ*, i. e. excursive speculation is mere vanity, *הַבָּל וְרַעוּת רֵיחַ*.” This phrase is here used as before in a complaining and repining sense. I would here observe that the word *רַעוּת* is synonymous with *רַעְיוֹן* which we find in Dan. v. 6, in the sense of “thought,” “idea.” *וְרַעְיוֹנָיו יְבַחְלוּהוּ*, (Chaldee), “and his thoughts troubled him.”

10 רוּחַ : מֶה־שֶׁהָיָה בְּבֶר נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ וְנוֹדַע אֲשֶׁר־הוּא  
 11 אָדָם וְלֹא־יֻבַּל לָרִין עִם שְׁהִתְקִיף מִמָּנוּ : כִּי יִשְׁ-  
 12 דְּבָרִים הִרְבֵּה מִרְבִּים הָבֵל מֶה־יֹּתֵר לָאָדָם : כִּי  
 מִי־יֹדַע מֶה־טוֹב לָאָדָם בְּחַיִּים מִסֵּפֶר יְמֵי־חַיֵּי הָבֵל

מִהֲלֹךְ־נֶפֶשׁ. The (ר) under the word מִהֲלֹךְ is put for a cholem (ז), on account of the Makkeph following it.

מִהֲלֹךְ and לְהֵלֵךְ in the last verse are the infinitive of הָלַךְ preceded by prepositions, and used substantively for “excursive speculation.”

Solomon proceeds in the next verse to answer the objections contained in the last nine verses, beginning at vi. 1.

Ver. 10. “מֶה־שֶׁהָיָה...אָדָם. ‘Whatever each man has been, i. e. whether poor or rich and so on, his name, (i. e. the name of his condition) had already been assigned, and it was fixed respecting him before he was born in the previous will of the Creator that he was to be so,’ (as it is said respecting Cyrus, ‘I knew thee by name,’); that is, ‘it was already fixed from of old by the decree of the Creator what each man was to be in his time,’ so that the murmurers complain in vain; for the Divine decree cannot be changed, and consequently it is proper that living man should not murmur but sit ‘in silence and submission,’ for that ‘He has laid it upon him.’ (2 Sam. iii. 28.)” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. שֵׁם is used here in the sense of “condition, quality;” thus it is frequently used in the Psalms for the character or attributes of God: “According to thy name, i. e. thy excellence, so is thy praise, &c.” Ps. xlviii. 10; and so in Ps. cii. 21, where it can have no other sense; and נִקְרָא is often used for “to determine, name specifically;” as in Is. xlv. 7, “Who as I” יִקְרָא וַיְגִידָהּ “shall determine and proclaim it,” “announce

10 quoque *enim* vanitas est et inanis cogitatio." Quæ-  
 cunque fuerit dudum cujusque insignita erat nomine  
 conditio, notumque *dudum* erat quid quisque fu-  
 turus esset; adeo ut nequeat certare cum eo qui  
 11 potentior est ipso. Multæ enim res sunt quæ *so-*  
*lummmodo* augment vanitatem: quid prosunt homini.  
 12 Quis. enim novit quid sit homini in vitâ bonum

it before it come to pass," where the prophet is speaking of the power of God to foretell specifically what is about to happen.

The antecedent of the pronominal affix in שְׁמוֹ is אָדָם, "each man," to be supplied from the following clause.

"וְנוֹדַע וְכוּ", means, "And each man was known beforehand, what he was to be." It has been rendered, "And he is known that he is man;" but this sense would require the order in the text to be "וְנוֹדַע אִשָּׁר אָדָם הוּא."

תִּקְוָה is an adjective. הַ having crept in between the ש and ת, the word התִּקְוָה was supposed to be a verb Hiphil. The Masorites say the ה is superfluous. רִין is "litigare," and the sense of the latter half of the verse is, "so that it is impossible and out of the nature of things for a man to enter into judgment with and call to account him who has such absolute and eternal power over his destiny."

Ver. 11. "He mentions another argument against those "objections, that though there be many things which the poor "intelligent man is in want of, behold they only increase vanity "and windy notions, and what is the good of them to man?" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Supply at the end of this verse, "And why then should man complain of the want of them?"

Ver. 12. "צֵל, i. e. a shelter from the light of the sun, under "which men seek protection and refreshment in summer; and in "this book it is an expression applied to worldly good, in which

per numerum dierum vanæ ejus vitæ, quod tegmi-  
 nis illos loco sibi fingat? quum quis certiore<sup>CAP.</sup> eum<sup>VII.</sup>  
 faciet quid post eum sub sole futurum sit? Me-  
 lius est *aliquando* nomen *bonum* bono unguento,  
 et dies mortis hominis die ejus nascendi. Præstat 2

“man enjoys himself for a season, as we find, ‘בְּצֵל חַכְמָה בְּצֵל’  
 ‘בְּכֶסֶד.’ He means, ‘If a man knew what was good for him in  
 “this world during the term of his life-time, he might be inclined  
 “to say, ‘Behold, I will make the days of my life as a shelter to  
 “seek protection and enjoyment in, so that my lot may be one  
 “of cheerfulness; I will not provide or care about what may  
 “be ‘אַחֲרַי, i. e. in the direction behind me, among other men of  
 “the world beside me;’ like a man who sits under a shelter and  
 “trusts in it for a season while there is no one to tell him what  
 “may be behind him under the sun, i. e. in the sunshine, where  
 “the shade does not extend or give shelter. But this cannot  
 “be the case, for in truth man does not know what is good for  
 “him in this world.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. וַיַּעֲשֵׂם בְּצֵל means, “that he should make them as  
 a shelter,” i. e. “that he should act as if his life-time was  
 something he could reckon on with security.”

“אַשֶׁר מִי־וְכוֹ”, “whereas there is no one to warn him of any  
 future calamity that may be threatening him as it were from  
 behind on the earth, תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ;” for this I think is all that is  
 meant here by that phrase, and such is the meaning it has always  
 borne in this book. Mendlessohn’s interpretation of the passage  
 is exceedingly ingenious, and the only one at all satisfactory;  
 but it is rather forced where he attempts to carry out the  
 metaphor of the shade. אֲשֶׁר means, “inasmuch as.”

Ver. 1. “The diligent man has really no advantage over

CHAP. VII.  
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בַצֵּל אִשָּׁר מִי־יָגִיד לְאָדָם מִה־יְהִי אַחֲרָיו  
תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: טוֹב שֵׁם מִשְׁמָן טוֹב וַיּוֹם הַמָּוֶת 1  
מִיּוֹם הַוָּלָדוֹ: טוֹב לָלֶכֶת אֶל-בֵּית-אֶבֶל מִלָּכֶת אֶל- 2

“the intelligent poor man, although the latter be struggling  
“against life; since what is it that can really be called good in  
“life? Come and see how many uncertainties there are in this  
“matter, sometimes a name and good reputation are better than  
“the precious ointment with which kings are anointed, or with  
“which persons perfume themselves for delight; and a funeral-  
“day better than a birth-day, for death ushers man into that  
“real life which has no death after it.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. טוֹב שֵׁם מִשְׁמָן טוֹב, an elegant paronomasia. So  
we find in Is. v. 7, the famous paronomasia, וַיִּקְוּ לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהָיָה  
מִשְׁפָּח לְצִדְקָה וְהָיָה צַעֲקָה בְּקוֹל הַפְּרִים תַּחַת }  
אֲמִפּוֹבֹלִיָּה, in ver. 6, ch. *ibid.* }  
הַסִּיר, and in Jud. x. 4, we are told that the sons of Jair rode  
on thirty עֲיָרִים, “asses,” and had as many עֲיָרִים, “cities.”  
See also vii. 14, בְּיוֹם טוֹבָה הָיָה בְּטוֹב וּבְיוֹם רָעָה רָאָה.

He is pointing out, that sometimes those things which are  
most esteemed are less valuable than those which are less  
esteemed.

ט is here written large, this being one of the alphabet of  
large letters scattered through the Bible, which with many other  
marks were intended by the Masorites as a check on transcribers.

The literal rendering of the last clause is, “The day of  
*one's* death may be better than the day of *one's* being brought  
forth.”

Ver. 2. “If you see the wise man going to the house of  
“mourning, and the rich fool to a house of entertainment,



בֵּית מִשְׁתֶּה בְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא סוֹף כָּל־הָאָדָם וְהָיָה יָתֵן  
 3 אֶל־לִבּוֹ : טוֹב בְּעַם מִשְׁחֹק בִּי־בְרָע פָּנִים יֵיטֵב  
 4 לֵב : לֵב חֲכָמִים בְּבֵית אֶבֶל וְלֵב בְּסִילִים בְּבֵית  
 5 שְׂמֵחָה : טוֹב לְשִׁמְעַ גְּעֵרַת חָכָם מֵאִישׁ שֹׁמֵעַ שִׁיר  
 6 בְּסִילִים : בִּי בָקוֹל הַפִּירִים תַּחַת הַפִּיר בֵּן שְׂחָק

“think not in thy heart that this is bad for the former and  
 “good for the latter; for sometimes it is good to go to the  
 “house of mourning, since death is the end of all men, and  
 “the living will lay to heart there, (i. e. in the house of  
 “mourning) where he is going and what he will be at his  
 “end.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. אֶבֶל is almost invariably “luctus funereus,” “funeral wailing,” and such must be its sense here. Otherwise what can be meant by, “for that (אֶבֶל) is the end of every man, of all mankind?” תַּת אֶל־לֵב is used here in exactly the same sense as שִׁים אֶל־לֵב in Isaiah xlii. 25 and xlvii. 7, where serious consideration and reflection is implied. See also Eccles. ix. 1.

Ver. 3. “How can a man know what is good for him in  
 “his transitory life? For we see that sometimes vexation and  
 “suffering will be better for him than merriment and laughter;  
 “and consequently sadness is not always bad, nor merriment  
 “always good for man; for sometimes in sadness of the face  
 “the heart is cheerful.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn has commented on this verse at some length in his Preface, (vid. page 82.) יֵיטֵב in this place may either mean, “be cheerful,” or be in a good and well-regulated state, and free from the effect of vexation or other passions.

aliquando ire in domum luctûs quam ire in domum  
 convivii, quoniam finis est ille (sc. funereus luctus)  
 omnium hominum, atque *ibi* vivus finem *suum* menti  
 3 applicabit. Melior est *aliquando* tristitia risu; in  
 vultûs enim severitate bene se *aliquando* habebit  
 4 cor. Mens sapientum in ædibus luctus, et mens  
 5 stultorum in ædibus lætitiæ *versatur*. Melius est  
 objurgationem sapientis auscultare, quam ut quis  
 6 auscultet *adulatoriam* cantionem stultorum. Qualis

Ver. 4. "It is not in the house of constant feasting and  
 "mirth that the happiness of man is really found. On the  
 "contrary the wise do not close their eyes from beholding the  
 "afflictions and troubles of the sons of men, but go to the house  
 "of mourning, and comfort him who is in hard case, and cheer  
 "those who are in bitterness of soul, and by their conversation  
 "raise up the fallen; and this is the happiness they delight in,  
 "and the prosperity they really desire. Not so the fools. They  
 "have no enjoyment but in the house of feasting and revelry;  
 "and if they see 'failing knees,' they hide themselves from  
 "them." Mendlesohn.

Ver. 5. "If the wise man chide thee, and turn to thee an  
 "angry look, be not sullen at his reproof; for it is better to be  
 "listening to his rebuke than to the song of praise of fools;  
 "for the reproof of a wise man profits the soul, but the song of  
 "praise of fools corrupts it." Mendlesohn.

NOTE. שִׁיר must mean here, "a song of praise," "an  
 address of flattery;" otherwise there is no antithesis whatever  
 between the clauses of the sentence; and so it has generally  
 been rendered.

Ver. 6. "For like the noise of the thorns under a covered  
 "cauldron set over a fire of clipped brambles, which blaze and

enim est spinarum sub ollâ crepitus, talis est stultus; hic quoque vanus est. Oppressio enim *stulti* 7  
vesanum faciet sapientem, munificentia autem mentem ejus opprimet. Præstat postera pars negotii 8

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“crackle far more than wood which is more esteemed and  
“valuable (for logs of oak and pine do not crackle); so is the  
“laughter of the despicable fool, who makes his voice heard to  
“a distance among men, and whose mouth is full of unbounded  
“and licentious laughter. The noisy mirth of such an one is  
“vain and brings no good, like the crackling of thorns which is  
“useless and gives no heat to that which is boiling in the  
“cauldron.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The sense as indicated by the connexion of the passage must be that the joking of the flattering and insincere parasite is really as unprofitable to him who listens to it for amusement and gratification as the crackling blaze of thorns is for the boiling of a pot, and that it will at last be found to be so.

Ver. 7. “It is true that if a wise man sees the oppression  
“done in the world, the tranquillity of the wicked and the  
“foolish, and their overbearing conduct towards just and wise  
“men, he will be ready to turn mad, as though he went out  
“of his mind; and if the fool has the liberality in a fit of  
“greatness of mind to open his hand to the poor man who has  
“understanding, he will by so doing break that poor man’s heart  
“i. e. so distress him as entirely to deprive him of his mind and  
“reason; for the kindness of a fool is harder to bear than his  
“oppression and cruelty.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The words *יִאָבֵד* and *מִתְנַהֵר* do not agree in gender, the latter being feminine; so that, as Aben Ezra remarks, some word between them must be lost. The sense therefore is not quite complete. All we can gather from this verse and the

הַפֶּסֶל גַּם־זֶה הָבֵל : כִּי הָעֶשֶׂק יְהוֹלֵל חָכָם וַיֵּאבֶּר 7  
אֶת־לֵב מִתְנַה : טוֹב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מִרְאשִׁיתוֹ טוֹב 8

context is that the general sense of the passage must be, that to a wise man nothing will be so intolerable as the favour of fools, i. e. their praise or their liberality. He would rather be suffering from their wanton oppression and unreasonable caprice, which is sufficiently hard to bear and is enough to drive him mad. But the commendation of fools would be so intolerable to him, that it would quite break his heart.

Ver. 8. “Nevertheless it is not proper for a wise man to “go mad at seeing oppression. Let him only call to mind that “the end of a business is better than its beginning; for when a “thing is only beginning, we do not know how it will turn out “at last; and so the patient man who promotes love, and keeps “silence before God and waits for him, may be better off “eventually than the high-spirited who kicks and murmurs “much against God and the ways of his providence.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. גְּבִיָּה, and אָרָךְ, of which גְּבִיָּה is the construct form, are both adjectives. I do not think with Mendlessohn that this verse is at all intended to qualify the preceding. In the last he is merely expressing the strong disgust which a wise man ought to feel at the liberality or approbation of fools, in order to shew that blame is sometimes to be preferred to praise. But here, and in the two next verses, he proceeds to recommend submission to the Divine disposal and that spirit of patient waiting to see what will be the final result of the decrees of providence which is so opposite to the spirit of captious murmurers whose objections are mentioned in the former part of this section; for it is to be recollected that the whole of this

- 9 אַרְךְ-רוּחַ מִגְבֵּה רוּחַ : אֶל-תִּבְהַל בְּרוּחֶךָ לִבְעוֹם בִּי
- 10 לָעֵם בְּחִיק בְּסִילִים יָנוּחַ : אֶל-תֹּאמַר מַה הִיא
- שְׁהִימִים הָרָאשֹׁנִים הֵיוּ טוֹבִים מֵאַלֶּה בִּי לֹא
- 11 מִחֲכָמָה שְׂאֵלָתָ עַל-זֶה : טוֹבָה חֲכָמָה עִם-נַחֲלָה

passage is an answer to them. He says, "The end of a thing may be better than it at first promised to be; and consequently the patient man, who waits to see the end of it without murmuring or restlessness, may find himself better off at last than he who has been impatient and precipitate.

Ver. 9. "Be not hasty in the beginning of a thing to "conceive vexation at what thine eyes see of the ways of the "providence of God; for it is in the bosom of fools that such "anger rests; since the ways of supreme providence are al- "ways in perfect goodness, as is necessarily the case with Him "who is good and does good to all; and if man knew all the "details and mysteries of providence, there is no doubt that all "such anger would be appeased and such vexation set at rest; "and that he would ever be rejoicing in the ways and attri- "butes of supreme providence, and praising it; and consequent- "ly such vexation is generated only in the lap of folly and "defect of understanding." Mendlessohn. See the Preface.

NOTE. "Vexation will rest," יָנוּחַ. So Proverbs xiv. 33, בָּלֵב נָכוֹן תִּנּוּחַ חֲכָמָה, i. e. "It is cherished." Mendlessohn has a very interesting discussion in his Preface on the Biblical view of anger and other passions as displayed by a child of man, and as said to be displayed by the Deity in his dealings with men.

Ver. 10. "Shouldest thou be brought down from thy rank "and thy wealth, say not, 'How did it happen?' as fools say to "themselves when their riches and treasures perish. In such



9 primordiis ejus; præstat lentus animi superbo. Ne  
 præceps sis ad vexationem concipiendam; vexatio  
 enim in sinu stultorum *tantum* locum habebit.  
 10 Ne dicas, "Quî factum est ut dies priores his  
*præsentibus* fuerint meliores?" parum enim sapien-  
 11 ter de istâ re interrogares. Utilis est *quidem*

"case, it seems to them as if the original order of things must  
 "have been changed; but the intelligent man knows that it  
 "is just the same as before, and that the supreme ordinances  
 "are left just as they were; only that the recipients of the  
 "Divine bounty are changed, each according to his respective  
 "portion." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. תִּשְׁאַל means here, "Thou wouldst have asked."  
 Since there is no subjunctive mood in Hebrew, the tenses of the  
 indicative are necessarily used to supply its place, and the con-  
 text will generally indicate when this is the case. Here there  
 can be no doubt that it is so. The same is the use in Hebrew  
 when the potential mood is required, as I have already noticed  
 several times in this book where I have translated the future  
 tense by "may," &c.

Ver. 11. "He says, 'If whilst thou wast rich, and owner  
 "of an inheritance, thou hast perceived that wisdom is valuable  
 "along with an inheritance; now that thou hast lost that in-  
 "heritance, thou wilt find that wisdom has superior advantage  
 "for man to an inheritance. 12. For as a man can trust in  
 "the protection which the possession of money affords him, so  
 "he may trust in that which the possession of wisdom affords;  
 "and in this respect at least they are equal in value; but  
 "the superior advantage of the possession of wisdom is that it  
 "can maintain him who possesses it when he is destitute of  
 "every thing else.'" Mendlessohn.

sapientia cum hæreditate, sed præstantioris apud illos qui solem aspiciunt utilitatis. “Idem enim est 12 sub tegmine esse sapientiæ quod sub tegmine esse nummi;” præstantia autem hæc attinet doctrinæ, quod sapientia possessorem suum per se sustinere possit (*vel* sustinebit). Contemplare opera Dei; 13 quis enim corrigere potest quidquid Ille fecerit perversum? Die prosperitatis sis in bono; et die 14

NOTE. Ver. 11. Some would render עִם in this place, “equally with,” the sense which it has in Eccles. ii. 16, Psalm LXXiii. 25, cvi. 6, Job ix. 26, &c., and translate, “Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, yea, of more value than it.” But Mendlessohn’s rendering connects these verses with the preceding, wherein we are forbidden to complain of the loss of worldly wealth. Solomon says, that in such case we are cast upon wisdom and philosophy for support, and that we shall then find that whereas money without wisdom frequently is most injurious and destructive, wisdom can preserve us alive when we are stripped of this world’s goods.

יֵתֵר is a substantive, and is equivalent to יֵתֵרוֹן, which is used in place of it in the next verse. It means “superiority,” and here, “superiority of utility,” or “superior utility.”

Ver. 12. The phrase בְּצֵל הַחֲכָמָה בְּצֵל הַכֶּסֶף is clearly proverbial, and is expressed with the usual brevity of adages, and would be written in inverted commas if they were used in Hebrew. בְּצֵל means here, as in chap. vii. 12, “a shelter,” “a protection.” We must understand “הַחֲכָמָה” before בְּצֵל, “He who is under the shelter of wisdom, is as though he were under the shelter of money,” which, like wisdom, gives a man power and consequently a certain degree of security. See Note to chap. i. 18, for instances of הַחֲכָמָה understood.

וַיִּתֵּר לְרֹאֵי הַשָּׁמַשׁ : כִּי בָצַל הַחֲכָמָה בָּצַל הַכֶּסֶף 12  
וַיִּתְּרוּ דָעַת הַחֲכָמָה תַּחֲיָהּ בְּעַלְיָהּ : רָאָה אֶת-מַעֲשֶׂיהָ 13  
הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי מִי יוּכַל לְתַקֵּן אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָנְתּוּ : בְּיוֹם 14  
טוֹבָה הִיָּה בְטוֹב וּבְיוֹם רָעָה רָאָה גַם אֶת-זֶה

Observe that the *zakeph* (:) is over דָעַת, which therefore is not in a state of construction with the next word. הַחֲכָמָה is the nominative to the verb תַּחֲיָהּ.

Ver. 13. "Do not wish events to roll on at thy own pleasure, but contemplate the appointments of God, checking thy own wishes in submission to His, as though the events did not affect thee or took place in thy sphere, but thou wert only viewing and contemplating them from a distance, 'for who can make right what He has made perverted?' He is the uncontrollable agent, and not thou; therefore it is for thy good not to be perversely opposed to His decree, but to regulate thy thoughts and actions according to the will and appointments of the Creator." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. מַעֲשֶׂה may be rendered here "appointments," a sense in which we meet with it several times in this book. See vii. 17. "So I contemplated the whole of the Divine appointments." See also iii. 14. "Contemplate," i. e. without repining, like an uninterested spectator. It is useless to do otherwise, as none can bring to greater perfection what He has apparently left imperfect. This is all in answer to the objections recited above.

We have a parallel passage to the last clause of this verse in i. 15, מַעֲשֶׂה לֹא יוּכַל לְתַקֵּן, "the perverted cannot be set right," i. e. in the condition of mankind.

לְעֵמֶת-יָוָה עֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים עַל-דִּבְרֹת שְׁלֹא יִמָּצֵא  
הָאָדָם אַחֲרָיו מְאוּמָה :

Ver. 14. “ ‘In the day of prosperity thou mayest continue in “happiness; and in the day of adversity רָאֵה, i. e. (as before), “ ‘contemplate it as from a distance, as if this adversity did not “affect or extend to thee; and seek out the cause which pro- “duces it;’ that is to say, ‘Consider from whom misfortunes “come upon thee. It is God who hath caused prosperity to “be counterbalanced by adversity, and distributed them so as “to correspond to each other, and connected them together, “in order that if man knew and comprehended their connexion “and correlation, he might not find any reflection to make “against God (להררר אחריו).’ ” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. There can be no doubt that we have in the beginning of this verse a fresh instance of paronomasia or alliteration. טוֹבָה and טוֹב are words of different sense; the first, טוֹבָה, invariably meaning, “kindness,” or “prosperity,” (the latter is its sense here,) and טוֹב meaning, “good,” morally, as in the Psalms, “Depart from evil, and do good.” Mendlessohn appears to take הֵיךְ בְּטוֹב to mean merely, “enjoy that good, i. e. prosperity;” but I much prefer to understand it, “continue in the practice of God’s will, i. e. of good, and do not allow worldly prosperity to pervert thee.” The same alliteration occurs in רָאֵה רָעָה בְּיוֹם רָעָה between רָעָה and רָאֵה.

This last phrase has been variously interpreted. We may either with Mendlessohn take רָאֵה as referring to רָעָה understood, and translate it, “In the day of adversity contemplate (that adversity) like an unconcerned spectator without repining;” or we may take רָאֵה absolutely or as referring to the following clause and translate, “In the day of adversity observe! (viz. the fact that) God has established a balance between good and

infortunii contemplare! hoc quoque par illi fecit Deus eo consilio, ne quid adversum Se (i. e. quod Sibi exprobrent) homines invenirent.

evil, &c.” Some indeed construe רָאָה before בְּיוֹם רָעָה thus, “In the day of prosperity continue in what is good, and keep in view the day of adversity, (i. e. in order that it may not overtake thee unprepared) for God has made such an equal distribution of prosperity and adversity that man cannot know or discover what may next befall him.” This is an excellent sense; but the evident similarity of construction of בְּיוֹם רָעָה, “in the day of adversity,” and בְּיוֹם טוֹבָה, “in the day of prosperity,” would thus be neglected.

When דִּבְרָה does not signify “a saying” or “subject of discourse” as in iii. 18, and viii. 2, it means “a cause” or “a reason,” and therefore עַל־דִּבְרָתָּ שֶׁ־ must be, “in order that.”

Mendlessohn agrees with Yarchi in treating לְמַצָּא אַחֵר as a phrase to express, “to find matter of reflection upon, i. e. to discover a cause of complaint against,” and with this rendering of it the antecedent of the affix of אַחֵר must be הָאֱלֹהִים, and the last clause mean, “in order that man might find no cause of complaint against him” (God). If we do not take those words to be a phrase, but אַחֵר to mean simply “after,” or “behind,” we may either take הָאָדָם as the antecedent of the affix, and translate thus, “in such a way that man cannot find out anything that may be behind him,” i. e. “that may be about to befall himself,” (as at vi. 12, מִה שֶׁיְהִיָּה אַחֲרָיו) or, making הָאֱלֹהִים the antecedent, “in such a way that man cannot make any improvement after Him,” i. e. “after what He has done, and the perfect arrangement which He has made.” But an objection against both these renderings is that עַל־דִּבְרָתָּ שֶׁ־ means, “in order that,” and not simply “in such a way that;” and that it



## SECTIO DECIMA.

Utraque hæc vidi in diebus vanitatis meis; est 15  
justus qui perit in justitiâ suâ, et improbus est

would not be a suitable answer to the objections against providence in chap. vi. to say that "God has distributed prosperity and adversity equally in the world," either "in order that he may be perfectly uncertain which of these is next to be his lot," or "in order that he may not be able to improve his own condition in the world."

Ver. 15. "The following circumstance and the reverse of "it have I seen during the few days that I am living on the "earth; there is the case of a king righteous in all his ways, "who never wrongs any man and does not molest the nations "surrounding his kingdom, who perishes in his justice and "does not prosper on the throne of his kingdom; and there "is also to be found the wicked man who molests all within "his reach, and nevertheless lives long in his sovereignty in the "midst of his wickedness." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. כֹּל here signifies "both." After מֵאֲרִיךְ understand יָמָיו.

Mendlessohn gives רָשַׁע here the sense of "molestus," "a troublesome, restless, man, who annoys others." Kimchi in his commentary on the Psalms says of this word, כִּי הֵעֵנִן הָרָשָׁע, הוּא הַחֲרָדָה כְּמוֹ "וְהוּא יִשְׁקִיט וְיָמִי יִרְשָׁע." אֶל-תִּרְשָׁע הָרִבָּה. הוּא הַחֲרָדָה כְּמוֹ "וְהוּא יִשְׁקִיט וְיָמִי יִרְשָׁע." i. e. "The sense of the word רָשָׁע is 'restlessness,' as in the passages, Job xxxiv. 29, 'Let him

## THE TENTH SECTION.

אֶת-הַכֹּל רָאִיתִי בְּיָמֵי הַבְּלָי יֵשׁ צַדִּיק אֲבָר בְּצַדִּיקוֹ 15

make still, and who shall make disturbed? 1 Sam. xiv. 47, 'Wherever he turned he caused confusion.' Eccles. vii. 17, 'Be not over restless.' Still more to the purpose is Eccles. viii. 8, וְלֹא יִמְלֹט רָשָׁע, "Restlessness will never save (a man from Divine judgments)," and Isaiah lvii. 20, "The restless bad man is like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, &c." In short this word denotes active mischief; not merely negative evil, the absence of good, but that wickedness which is ever plotting, and on the alert. Accordingly I have chosen to render רָשָׁע in the present passage by "wily;" (a word which is always used in a bad sense, and answers to the Latin "vafer.") It is here opposed to the appellation below of the good man, צַדִּיק, who is so upright himself, that he does not suspect others of any wrong, and may consequently perish through over simplicity. While the one is irreproachably upright, and supposes all around him to be as virtuous as himself, the other lives in an atmosphere of evil, imagines nothing but evil, and looks on all others as actuated by the same evil motives as himself.

בְּיָמֵי הַבְּלָי is literally "in the days of my vanity," i. e. "in my fleeting and transitory life." He says that all through it he has observed an unavoidable mixture of evil in human affairs, and that if we do not make allowance for it in our dealings with man, the consequence to ourselves may be very dangerous.

16 וַיֵּשׁ רָשָׁע מֵאַרְיֵךְ בְּרָעָתוֹ : אֶל-תִּהְי צַדִּיק הַרְבֵּה

Ver. 16. "Do not be just to an extreme beyond what is expedient; for he who is absolutely just," (and makes no allowance for the existence of wrong and evil in the world) "will not prosper in political administration; and do not affect excessive penetration, or look upon thyself as wiser than all that have been before thee; nor seek to manage every thing according to thy own opinion and forethought; why shouldst thou bring upon thyself the astonishment and disappointment of finding that thou hast been labouring to no purpose?" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Rosenmuller agrees with Mendlessohn in considering this advice addressed to a magistrate with regard to his administration of justice. But such a limitation is quite unnecessary. What Solomon is desirous here to inculcate is, that in our dealings with others we should neither be blind to the wrong and evil which prevails in the world, nor, on the other hand, be like the thoroughly bad man, who acts on the principle that every one is bad as himself; in short, neither to be too cunning, wily, and mischievous, nor to be too simple-hearted and good-natured. "Be not too just," means, "Act not as if there were nothing but justice in the world, or as if this were the only principle to be taken into account in your dealings with others;" i. e. "look not for justice too much." "Nor affect excessive penetration," (in Latin, "*nimiam solertiam*,") "do not pretend too much to a knowledge of the world, and a keen insight into the sinister motives of others, always giving them credit for the worst, (which is the opposite extreme to that other), since if you do so you will make yourself miserable, and kill yourself with suspicion and vexation." This interpretation is borne out by the next verse, and also by verse 19, where he says, "Observation

16 qui *vitam suam* producit in nequitiâ suâ. Ne sis nimium justus; neque solertiam nimium præ te

will shew you at once, that there is no good man in the world who never does wrong, and therefore you must not expect it; but at the same time do not keep your ears open to every slanderous report; if you do, you will be sure to hear yourself maligned, and so to be seriously annoyed." I consider the two clauses in this verse as antithetical to each other, and the next verse as merely a repetition of the same idea in different language, whereas Mendlessohn takes the two verses as antithetical to each other. The method I adopt is more simple, and therefore more in accordance with the genius of Hebrew style than that of supposing, as he does, an inverted antithesis between the corresponding parts of the two verses. This may exist indeed according to my rendering, though it is not necessary to the sense. For while I take אֶל-תְּהִי<sup>(1)</sup> צַדִּיק הַרְבֵּה to be opposed to אֶל-תִּתְחַבֵּם יוֹתֵר<sup>(2)</sup>, and אֶל-תִּרְשַׁע הַרְבֵּה<sup>(3)</sup> to be opposed to אֶל-תְּהִי<sup>(4)</sup> סָכָל; since (3) expresses the same idea with modification as (2), and (4) as (1), (3) may be said to be opposed to (1), and (4) to (2). But the existence of this inverted antithesis is not necessary to the sense of my rendering; whereas Mendlessohn's is entirely based upon it.

תְּשׁוּמִים. On this word the Rabbinic commentators make the following remarks. "Either it is from a Hithpohel conjugation, and the dagesh is inserted in the שׁ to compensate for the omission of the ת of the conjugation; (although for sake of euphony this ת does not come before, but after שׁ or ס in verbs beginning with either of those letters when in the Hithpohel, still in order to indicate the omission of it, the dagesh is placed in the שׁ, because the proper grammatical place of it is before that letter), or, which is more probable, it may

feras; cur teipsum enecabis? Ne sis nimium vafer, 17  
neque sis ineptus; cur ante tempus tuum peribis?  
Expedit ut hoc retineas, nec ab illo manum tuam 18  
remittas; nam Dei metuens utraque ista *extrema*

be a verb Niphal from שׁוּמִים, a word of the class "נָחַי בְּעֵין" (i. e. with a ו for the middle letter, and the last letter doubled, an additional anomaly) a class which is called that of the 'squared' conjugation, (because לָלַךְ may be represented by לָלַךְ), like תִּכְוֶנָּה." He evidently considers כֹּוֶנָּה a quadrilateral, and in the Kal conjugation, of which יִכְוֶנָּה would be future Niphal, (not taking it, as the Lexicographers do, to be the Pihel of כָּוַן which they say is the obsolete Kal form of the verb;) and inclines to think there are similar forms, שׁוּמִים and יִשׁוּמִים. This is ingenious; but the former derivation is less novel, and perhaps gives a better sense. The Hithpohel of שָׁמַם, ("to lay waste," or "destroy,") almost always means to be "astonished, amazed," vide Is. Lix. 16, Lxiii. 5, Ps. cxliii. 4, and so Mendlessohn takes it here; but I prefer to translate, "Why shouldest thou kill thyself ('teipsum eneces') with suspicion?" considering that Solomon is warning against the consequences of "affecting excessive penetration." The fact of תִּתְחַבֵּם being in the Hithpohel, seems to indicate that תִּשׁוּמִים is in a similar conjugation and bears a reflective sense.

תִּהְיֶה is, of course, the apocopated form for תִּתְחַבֵּה, like יִהְיֶה for יִתְחַבֵּה, which is always used with ו conversive, and with אֶל־.

Ver. 17. "But beware that thou incline not to the other  
"extreme, that thou be not mischievous to an extreme, or be  
"foolish so as to believe every lie thy servants tell thee with-  
"out looking after them, lest they secretly devise a plot against  
"thee to destroy thee prematurely." Mendlessohn.



וְאַל-תִּתְחַכֵּם יוֹתֵר לָמָּה תִּשׁוּמָם : אֶל-תִּרְשָׁע הַרְבֵּה 17

וְאַל-תִּהְיֶה סָבָל לָמָּה תָּמוּת בְּלֹא עֲתִיד : טוֹב אֲשֶׁר 18

תִּאָּחַז בָּזֶה וְגַם-מִזֶּה אֶל-תִּנַּח אֶת-יָרֵךְ כִּי-יֵרָא אֱלֹהִים

NOTE. As I have already said, I take this verse not as antithetical to the preceding, as Mendlessohn does, but as a repetition of it in stronger words, with a different order of the clauses. "Be not too wily," corresponds to "affect not excessive penetration," and "be not too simple" to "look not for justice too much;" and the questions at the ends of the two verses refer respectively only to the last clause of each; so that there is a warning against both extremes. On the one hand, the wily man is warned that he may wear himself out with causeless suspicions, and on the other, the simple-hearted man who supposes every one to be as good and as well-meaning as himself, that he may fall a prey to the designs of the insidious.

The word תִּרְשָׁע here is hardly capable of being represented by a single word in English. It represents the spirit of the mischievous and bad man, who in all his plans calculates on the depravity of all he has to deal with, and therefore has recourse to wiles which the simple-hearted is incapable of conceiving, and is ever restless and on the alert in the prosecution of them. As it is a stronger phrase than תִּתְחַכֵּם, so אֶל-תִּהְיֶה סָבָל is stronger than "צַדִּיק אֶל-תִּהְיֶה הַרְבֵּה."

Ver. 18. "It is expedient for thee to take hold on both "of these courses, and to go in the middle path between "them; for that is the right way for a man to choose." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn's explanation of this verse is extremely ingenious. He implies that when Solomon says, "Retain hold

19 יֵצֵא אֶת-כָּלֶם : הַחֲכָמָה תִּעָזוּ לַחֲכָם מִעֲשָׂרָה

20 שְׁלִיטִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ בָּעִיר : כִּי אָדָם אֵין צָדִיק

21 בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה-טוֹב וְלֹא יִחָטֵא : גַּם לְכָל-

on the one extreme, and let not go the other," he does not mean that a man is to practise either of them in the slightest degree, for that "he who fears God will come out of both of them," but that he is to be like one walking between two fences and taking hold ever and anon of each of them to keep himself in the middle.

**נָתַח** and **נָתַח** occur several times in this book in the sense "to remit," "to let go," "to relinquish." The Lexicographers probably disliking the anomaly of a verb beginning with a double **נ**, class these and their cognate forms (as **מָנִיחַ**) under the verb **נָתַח**, from which they cannot be derived by any regular form. The dagesh of the **נ** indicates them to be derived from a root **נָנַח**, which is of the class called **הֶסְרִי פ'**, though **נָנַח** still remains an irregular form, for, as the regular Hiphil from **נָנַח**, it should be **תִּנְחִיחַ**.

We find **יֵצֵא**, "egredi," used with an accusative in Gen. xlv. 4, xxxiv. 24, Amos iv. 3. **כָּלֶם** again means "both of them."

Ver. 19, 20. "He says, 'If a wise man knew every thing "done under the government of several rulers who have been "in authority in any particular city, this maxim would be confirmed and verified to him, 'that there is no just man in the "world who does righteously and never does wrong, and that it "is impossible for a ruler to walk in the path of absolute justice to such a degree as to do nothing but right to all who "live under his government;' therefore continue in the middle "path, and it will be well with thee.'

19 evadet. Præceptum hoc sapientiæ apud sapientem confirmabitur a decem quibuslibet magnatibus qui  
 20 urbi præfuerint; quod “nemo in terrâ adeo justus  
 21 est, ut recte faciat nec unquam peccet.” Ne tamen ad omnia quæ dicant homines verba mentem tuam

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“תַּעֲזֹר is from the root עָזַז, a word expressing strength and “might, which is metaphorically applied to the mind, as in the “phrases עָזִי נִפְּשׁ, Is. lvi. 11, ‘stout-hearted,’ ‘determined.’ “יַעֲנֶה עֲזוֹת, Prov. xviii. 23, ‘answers confidently, boldly.’ It “is here metaphorically applied to a thing’s confirming and “verifying itself to the mind of a wise man.

“The מִ- before עֲשֶׂרֶת is the מִ- of place, and not of the “comparative degree, and expresses that a wise man will learn “the truth of this maxim from them, from observation upon “them, and it will confirm itself to him thereby.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. We find in ix. 13, a similar use of חֵכְמָה, to denote “a piece of wisdom,” “a wise maxim.”

All the Commentators beside Mendlessohn take the מִ- here to be that of the comparative degree and consequently have not seen the close connexion of verses (20) and (19), or made sense of the passage.

“Ten” is used here for any collective number, as we say “several.”

Solomon is here, as I observed, giving a reason for what he said above, that a man must not expect perfect justice in the world or act as if he did; i. e. that in his dealings, especially in a magisterial capacity he must not look for perfection in others or affect it in himself; and he now proceeds to state why we should not on the other hand be too suspicious and open to slanderous reports.

Ver. 21, 22. “Now since thou hast chosen the middle

applies; quominus audias si tibi servus tuus oblo-  
 quatur; quum tute tibi conscius sis te quoque 22  
 sæpenumero aliis oblocutum esse. Cunctam hanc 23  
 rem tentavi sapientiâ (*sive* philosophice); dicebam,  
 “Intelligam;” sed ea procul a me remota erat. Pro- 24  
 cul remotum est quod *olim* fuit; et *arcanorum*

“course, i. e. to take hold on the two extremes and so keep  
 “between them, thou oughtest not to pay attention to every  
 “thing that others say of thy government and the administra-  
 “tion of thy kingdom, nor care for what people talk in their  
 “usual way of finding fault with every thing that is done with-  
 “out their personal co-operation in it; and if thy servant speak  
 “disparagingly of thee and blame thy conduct, shut thy ears  
 “from hearing him do so, for ofttimes thou too hast spoken  
 “lightly of others and blamed their conduct, and sometimes  
 “when they were more in the right than thou; therefore thou  
 “must not care about what they complainingly say, or about vain  
 “reports which have nothing substantial in them, nor depart  
 “from the right way which thou hast chosen.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 21. **נִי** means in ver. 21, “yet,” “still,”  
 “nevertheless,” in which sense we find it also in iv. 16 and  
 viii. 12 of this book, and again in Ps. cxxix. 2, “Yet they have  
 not prevailed against me,” and Ezek. xvi. 30, “Yet thou wast  
 not satisfied with this.” Ver. 22. The **קִרִי** on **אֶתָּה** is **אֶתָּה**.

Solomon says, “While you must not imagine all the world  
 to be just and upright, at the same time you must not be at-  
 tentive to the murmurs and slanderous reports that may be  
 abroad; and if your servant speak disparagingly of you, you  
 must be as though you heard it not, knowing that such things  
 are often said thoughtlessly, and recollecting your own failings  
 in this respect.” What is to be avoided by means of this

הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יִדְּבְרוּ אֶל-תֶּתֶן לִבְךָ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִשְׁמַע  
 אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ מִקְלָלֶךָ : כִּי גַם-פְּעָמִים רַבּוֹת יֵדַע לִבְךָ 22  
 אֲשֶׁר גַּם-אַתָּה קָלַלְתָּ אַחֲרָיו : כֹּל-זֶה נִסִּיתִי בַחֲכָמָה 23  
 אֲמַרְתִּי אַחֲכָמָה וְהִיא רְחוּקָה מִמֶּנִּי : רְחוֹק מֶה- 24

determined inattention to the slanders of murmurers which he recommends, is not the being found fault with by one's servant, but the listening to it and being annoyed thereby, if he speak disparagingly. As Luther says at this place, "He who from suspicion wants to hear all that people say about him will sometimes hear things he would rather not have heard."

Ver. 23. "All this that I examined philosophically was "but a very small part of the wisdom emphatically called so, "viz. the supreme wisdom in the government of creation; but "when I said to myself, I shall understand it and attain to the "perfect comprehension of it, I still found that it was far off "from me." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. נִסָּה means here "to test;" vid. ii. 1. כֹּל-זֶה is for כֹּל-זוֹת. "All this matter," "this unavoidable mixture of evil in the world," I tested by the rules of philosophy, and thought for a time that I should be able to explain it; but I approached no nearer by all my researches to the true and thorough explanation of the thing. It still continued beyond my reach.

הִיא refers not to חֲכָמָה, as Rosenmüller takes it, but to the same antecedent as זוֹה which is also in the feminine gender, viz. "this phenomenon in the moral condition of mankind."

אֲמַרְתִּי is here put for בִּלְבִי in chap. iii.

Ver. 24. "What has been is very remote, i. e. what took "place in the beginning of this created world when man was "yet in the supreme degree of felicity before the fall; all that



25 שְׁהִיָּה וְעֵמֶק וְעֵמֶק מִי יִמְצְאוּנוּ : סִבּוֹתֵי אֲנִי וְלִבִּי  
 לָדַעַת וְלָתוֹר וּבִקְשׁ חֲכָמָה וְהִשְׁבִּיחַ וְלָדַעַת רֶשַׁע  
 26 זָכָל וְהִסְכִּילֹת הוֹלִלוֹת : וּמוֹצֵא אֲנִי מִרַמְּנוֹת אֶת-  
 הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-הִיא מִצֹּדִיִּים וְהִרְמִים לָבָה אֲסוּרִים

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“is remote from man at present, and an exceedingly deep sub-  
 “ject, so that it is difficult to comprehend it in its true aspect  
 “by any effort of the understanding; for man as he is at pre-  
 “sent is very far from that state of perfection. עֵמֶק is applied  
 “to anything which man cannot attain to without difficulty and  
 “danger, and is here metaphorically applied to the contempla-  
 “tion of an obscure and difficult subject.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. He tried to account for the necessity of recognizing the existence of evil in dealings with our fellow-men, which he who carries justice to excess neglects to do, or, in other words, he endeavoured to ascertain the origin of evil, but found the discovery of its primary cause too deep for him on account of the extreme remoteness of the past.

Ver. 25. “And so I turned myself to examine the wisdom  
 “of the Divine administration, and the relation and proportion  
 “of natural evils to their causes and origins, and to understand  
 “how wickedness comes from folly and madness from ignorance;  
 “for that since no evil comes from God, of necessity evil must  
 “have arisen by reason of defect, and consequently ignorance  
 “must be the cause of sin in man, and it must be in consequence  
 “of his lack of knowledge that he acts madly and wickedly.  
 “(For ignorance is not sin in itself, but the fount and origin of  
 “sin, and he therefore sought to discover how folly turns into  
 “wickedness, and ignorance into madness.) הִשְׁבִּיחַ is ‘a theory

25 profundissimum; quis id comperiet? *Itaque* convertēbam meipsum, et *sese* mens mea *convertebat*, ad cognoscendam, et ad explorandam, quarendamque rationem philosophicam et explicationem, scilicet ad intelligendum quomodo fit improbitas ex ignorantia, 26 et e stultitia dementia. Et feminam comperibam maligniorem esse letho causam; quippe quæ quoad

“to account for the connexion between cause and effect.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. אֲנִי וְלִבִּי סָבֹוֹתִי literally, “I and my mind turned,” the verb agreeing with the first person as more worthy.

Finding himself unable to discover the primary cause of the existence of evil, he tried the hypothesis that (since all evil must arise from defect,) evil originates in ignorance and folly; and on this hypothesis, as he tells us in the next verse, he traced evil to carnal lust as a secondary cause, led away by which the natural man distinguishes not between real good and apparent or present good, and so falls into sin.

Better than Mendlessohn’s interpretation of חֵכְמָה as “the Divine wisdom,” is to take it as expressing somewhat the same idea as חֵשְׁבֹן, viz. “a wise, philosophic explanation.”

We have here חֵלְלוֹת used in the sense of wickedness, because sin is the highest degree of infatuation. It means “moral obliquity,” “perversion of the moral sense,” as sometimes it does that of the intellect. So it is unquestionably used in ix. 3, where it is employed as synonymous with רָע. Similarly נָבָל means both “foolish” and “wicked.”

Ver. 26. הָאִשָּׁה, (‘woman’ in the abstract), is here used “as an epithet of carnal lust and desire. This is the occasion “of both those evils to us; out of it arises our wickedness “and infatuation, for it seduces the eyes of men, and perverts

mentem ejus ceu retia sit et laquei, et cujus manus vincula sint; servatur ex eâ qui Deo acceptus sit, peccator autem ab eâ illaqueatur. En! hanc rationem comperi; indicavit eam *mihi* collectio; res

“their thoughts; and it is as a net and a gin to entrap souls  
 “and to make them fall into a snare, so as never to rise up  
 “again; and its hands are like iron fetters to bind him who is  
 “decoyed by it. And after calling it nets and gins, he goes on  
 “to say that it is ‘a net for every sinner,’ and this conveys a  
 “conclusive answer to the question mentioned above; for when  
 “lust supervenes upon ignorance the result is necessarily wicked-  
 “ness and madness; since if man knows not how to distinguish  
 “real good from apparent, and to make his choice accordingly,  
 “and lust, as is always the case where it exists, be ever busy  
 “and restless in him, it is impossible for man not to be brought  
 “into sin by lust; and it will be just as if ignorance were con-  
 “nected with carnal desire, and thus engendered wickedness and  
 “madness.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. It must be recollected in reading the English translation, that what Solomon means in this place by “woman,” is carnal lust which he has personified in this way; but consistently with the method of literal translation which I have elsewhere adopted, no other rendering of אִשָּׁה could be given.

מוֹצָא in the participle expresses that this was the result he had come to, and which he still held to be the true one, as we should say, “I find.”

Observe that מַר does not agree with אִשָּׁה; I therefore understand with מַר the word “cause,” and translate it, “a bitter occasion of evil.” If it agreed with אִשָּׁה, we should have had מַרָּה; nor would the רִבְעִי have been over מֶתֶת.

אֲשֶׁר means here, “inasmuch as,” Latine, “quippe.” לְבָה

יְדִיָּה טוֹב לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים יִמְלֹט מִמָּוֶה וְחוּטָא יִלְכֹּד  
 בָּהּ : רָאָה זֶה מִצָּאֵתִי אֲמָרָה קִהְלֹת אֶחָת לְאַחַת 27

is placed absolutely, as in Ps. LXXXiii. 6, נִוְעָצוּ לֵב יַחְדָּי, "They have consulted together (as to, i. e. in) their heart;" and iii. 8, הִכִּיתָ אֶת-כָּל-אֹיְבֵי לִחִי, "Thou hast smitten all my enemies (as to) the cheek-bone;" where see Kinchi. The same is probably the construction of יְדִיָּה. If so, the translation is this, "Since she is nets and snares as to her heart, and bonds as to her hands."

Ver. 27. "If you lay one consideration by the side of another, and search out by the exercise of the understanding the relation of each to each, you will find the above to be a theory connecting folly and ignorance with wickedness and madness." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. He had started with the hypothesis that wickedness must proceed from ignorance because it must arise from defect; and next came the question how wickedness proceeds from ignorance. To explain this he had amassed a large collection (קִהְלֹת) of facts, laying one by the side of another (אֶחָת לְאַחַת), and contemplating their relative bearings; and by this colligation of facts, had at last been led to the theory stated in the preceding verse that carnal lust is the connecting link between ignorance and sin. קִהְלֹת is here (and here only) used as a feminine, and must therefore in this place be an abstract noun, and mean "compilation," or "collection." The expression אֶחָת לְאַחַת לְמִצָּא חֲשָׁבוֹן is inserted merely to explain the word קִהְלֹת, and to inform us why he adopted the method of "compilation" in order to arrive at a theory of connexion between ignorance and sin. אֶחָת לְאַחַת is clearly a proverbial form of expression; a phrase; like "קוֹ לְקוֹ" in Isaiah, "line (must

28 לְמִצָּה הַשְּׁבוֹן : אֲשֶׁר עוֹד-בִּקְשָׁה נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא מִצָּאתִי  
אָדָם אַחֵר מֵאֵלַי מִצָּאתִי וְאִשָּׁה בְּכָל-אַלֶּה לֹא

be added or laid) upon line, &c.” i. e. for instruction to be successful. So here he says, “One fact,” or “argument must be laid to another,” i. e. a colligation of facts and observations must be made, in order for a true theory to be arrived at; or he may be stating that such was the method he pursued in order to arrive at this particular theory. Thus אִמְרָה קֹהֶלֶת means, “a compilation told it me,” i. e. the method of colligation of reasons led me to this result, and the latter clause either “one fact was added to another to find out the theory,” or, “fact must be added to fact to find out a theory.” The last is most in accordance with the evidently proverbial character of the expression. It is remarkable that Solomon should have thus incidentally described a method of research so closely analogous to that of Induction, as that which he himself adopted in moral philosophy.

Ver. 28. “There can be no doubt that when king Solomon “perceived that his wives turned away his heart from after his “God, his spirit was broken within him, and he repented of “his past life, and that it was in the bitterness of his soul “that, after speaking severely of women, and laying on them “the blame of his sin which he had sinned in transgressing the “commandments of his God, and calling sensual lust by the “name ‘woman,’ and declaring it to be more malignant than “death, he now says besides that a good man may be found “in a thousand, but that a good woman cannot be found in “that number. Now this was the number of his wives, viz. a “thousand, ‘for he had seven hundred wives, (queens, or princes) “and three hundred concubines (of lower degree,)’ and one “virtuous woman he had not found among them all. But an



enim rei apponenda est ad explicationem invenien-  
 28 dam. Quoniam usque toto animo quæsi vi nec tamen  
 inveni; e mille viris unum inveni, unam vero inter

“intelligent man must feel sure that the king exceeded due  
 “bounds, and that if he had taken to himself only one wife, or  
 “a few, agreeably to the commands of his God, he might pos-  
 “sibly have found among them a help meet for him, as many  
 “have found who have not attained to the eminence of this  
 “wise man; for there are good and bad among women as  
 “well as among men. But since Solomon overstepped the  
 “bounds of moderation and went to excess and took to him-  
 “self a thousand wives, whereas God commands a king not to  
 “multiply wives to himself, it is not to be wondered at that he  
 “did not meet with help or love among them, or that attach-  
 “ment and conjugal affection which properly belongs to a single  
 “man who marries a single woman. And though that plurality  
 “be not forbidden to a private person, still in respect of moral  
 “discipline and propagation of offspring it is certainly advisable  
 “for a man not to have more than one wife.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. This verse is a record of his observation on the  
 depravity of women, which was one of the circumstances which  
 had led him to the above conclusion. Mendlessohn in com-  
 menting on it speaks too lightly of the words of the inspired  
 writer, who at least was prevented by the superintendence of  
 the Holy Spirit from asserting what was false. It is just pos-  
 sible, as he says, that Solomon may be alluding to the number  
 of his own wives; but the idea is somewhat fanciful.

There can be no doubt that אִשָּׁה in this verse means, “be-  
 cause,” or “since,” as it does in verse 26 supra, Gen. xxxiv.  
 27, 1 Kings xv. 5, &c., and because בְּקִשָּׁה is in the Pihel and  
 therefore transitive, we must translate, “Since I have long sought  
 for *a certain thing*, but have never found it,” and in the next

cunctas totidem mulieres non inveni. Præterquam, 29  
 en! hanc causam reperi, nempe quod probos fecerat  
 homines Deus, illi autem multas machinationes ex-<sup>CAP.</sup> VIII.  
 cogitaverunt. Quis erit sicut sapiens? et quis *hujus* 1

clause he explains that this was "one virtuous woman among a thousand." The phrase "my mind has sought," is equivalent to "I have sought earnestly." If אֲשֶׁר were governed by בְּקִשָּׁה, and the sense, "that which I have sought," we should have had אֶת־הָאִשָּׁר or at least הָאִשָּׁר, and the ך before מִצְאָתִי would be superfluous, since the conductive ך is unnecessary in so short a sentence. עוֹד is used here in the same sense (of "usque," "incessantly,") as in Ruth i. 14, "And he wept on his neck עוֹד 'a long time,' 'unceasingly';" Ps. LXXXIV. 5, "They will continually praise thee;" and Jer. ii. 9.

Ver. 29. "Besides that which I have mentioned I have discovered this origin of evil in the world, that God made man at first upon the earth upright, (for all the powers and faculties implanted in the heart of man were given him by the Lord of goodness for a good and right purpose, and so man was upright before his fall as to all the faculties of his soul, walking in his integrity); but that they, i. e. Adam and Eve and their children after them have devised many inventions and ideas by means of which they have perverted that rectitude, and embittered that sweetness. For the state of the world was not always as it is now; but all the works and successful manufactures, and all the designs and performances of art which we see in our time and fancy that they are necessary to the subsistence of the human race, these, I say, never existed till after the sons of men had deserted the right way for which they were created and sought them out crooked paths. From these devices proceed each man's envy and jealousy of his neighbour, and covetousness of wealth and rank, which are the

29 CHAP.  
VIII. מִצָּאתִי : לְבַד רְאֵה־נָה מִצָּאתִי אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים  
אֶת־הָאָדָם יֵשֶׁר וְהִמָּה בִקְשׁוֹ הִשְׁכֵּנֹת רַבִּים : מִי 1

“occasion of evil and the origin of many sins in the world.  
“But if man had continued in the condition in which he was  
“created, he would have been saved from all these dangers;  
“for he would have felt no jealousy or anger or covetousness  
“or desire of greatness; for all these are the consequences of  
“the devices which the sons of men have invented.” Mendlesohn.

NOTE. After לְבַד understand מֵאֲשֶׁר; for לְבַד־מִ- is “beside,” and this אֲשֶׁר is omitted on account of the next one.

רְאֵה־נָה, both here and in the 27th verse, is nothing more than a demonstrative pronoun answering to “hiece” in Latin, “*ούτοι*” in Greek, and “*ceci*” in French, and may be represented by the English vulgarism, “this here.” And the literal order and rendering will be, “Beside that (לְבַד מֵאֲשֶׁר) I discovered this (additional reason) מִצָּאתִי רְאֵה־נָה.” The principal secondary cause of evil which he discovered was carnal lust; but besides this he observed the progress of human art and invention (which did not make its appearance till after the fall, vide Gen. iv.) to be a fruitful source of evil.

הַשְׁבוֹן is masculine, but has a feminine termination in the plural, like אֵב, מְקוֹם, עֵץ, &c.

Ver. 1. “‘He who should be like the truly wise man, “i. e. one acquainted with the supreme and real wisdom, viz. “the providence of God and its exalted and mysterious ways, “and like him understand the interpretation of this difficulty “so as to be able to explain it in all its details, what is the “origin of evil in the world, and what will be the end of it,

בְּהַחֲלֹם וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ בְּפֶשֶׁר דָּבָר חֲכָמַת אָדָם תֵּאֵיר  
פָּנָיו וְעֵז פָּנָיו יִשְׂנָא :

“and how God changes it into what is ‘good and excellent in its own season,’ (for in what he has said above he has “approached this subject only by very indirect methods, and “merely stated that evil has been introduced among men “through means of ignorance and carnal lust, and that the “state of the world was different at first, and the like, but has “acknowledged that with respect to the details of this subject, “the investigation of it was beyond his powers,) ‘whoever,’ “he declares, ‘should be like that truly wise man, it is certain “that the Divine wisdom which he would possess would dispel “from his mind all repining and sadness, (for such a wise man “will rejoice in every thing that takes place under the sun, since “he understands and has attained to the explanation why God “has decreed respecting it that it should be, and how it must be “for a purpose good and pleasing to God); so that this wisdom “would enlighten his countenance, and the cheerfulness and “confidence of his looks would be twice that of the looks of “other men. He would never feel peevishness or vexation; “never be astonished or provoked to madness at events which “happen; but his looks would always be bright, and his heart “cheerful about all the appointments of God from small to “great.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. הַחֲכָם is used κατ’ ἐξοχήν, and means “the truly wise man.” פְּשֶׁר is connected with the Chaldee פֶּשֶׁר, which means the same as the Hebrew פֶּתֶר, “interpretatus est,” in Gen. xl. 8. הָאֵיר פָּנָיו means, “to make the face cheerful and serene,” like הָאֵיר עֵינָיו in Ps. xix. 9, and Ezra ix. 8; compare 1 Sam. xiv. 29.

Mendlessohn has given us the true clue to the meaning of

rei interpretationem intelligens? Illius viri sapientia vultum ejus illustrabit, et faciei ejus fiducia duplicabitur.

this verse by shewing its connexion with the preceding instead of the following passage. He translates it, "He who should be like the truly wise man, and he who should understand the explanation of this subject, the wisdom of that man would enlighten his countenance, and the cheerfulness (or 'confidence') of his looks would be doubled." According to this rendering, דָּבָר has here the same sense as in xii. 13, סוֹף דָּבָר הַבֵּל, "the conclusion of this whole subject;" (whereas if the verse be disjoined from the preceding passage the meaning of דָּבָר is perfectly vague and indefinite), and יִשְׁנֶא, the Puhal of שָׁנָא, means either "is repeated," i. e. "doubled," or "is changed," i. e. "renewed," like חָלַף in Is. xl. 31, יִחַלְּפוּ כֹחַ, "they shall change," i. e. "renew their strength," so that עֵץ being rendered "confidence," the two last clauses of the verse are quite consistent in sense.

Those who connect this verse with the following passage translate it thus, "Who can be compared with the really wise man? and who with one that understands the true explanation of any matter? (בֵּי being supplied before יוֹדֵעַ from בְּדַחְכָּם). A man's wisdom, (or 'the wisdom of such an one,') enlightens his countenance, and the arrogance of his looks is removed." They render יִשְׁנֶא "is changed (into humility)," i. e. "is removed;" which is very forced; and assert that עֵץ פָּנִים is always used in a bad sense, for "arrogant," as in Dan. viii. 23, and Deut. xxviii. 50; but in these places it may simply mean, "bold," "resolute;" and allowing that עֵץ is sometimes used in a bad sense, as in Gen. xlix. 7, עֵץ has always a good sense, and means nothing but "robur," i. e. here "confidence." This rendering of the verse in fact is an attempt to establish a



## SECTIO UNDECIMA.

Ego *moneo* ut tu regis jussa observes, et auctoritate præditus verba Divini jurisjurandi *observet*.

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connexion of sense between this verse and those which follow by making it mean that superior sagacity will always remove arrogance, and so promote submission to regal authority. Whether this however is necessarily the effect of superior sagacity is at least questionable, and the translation therefore improbable.

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Ver. 2. "He speaks here of the relative duties of a king and his people, and discusses in what way they may best attain to political prosperity. He says, I warn and command every individual of the people to observe the king's word; for he is in authority among the people to do according to his will, and I advise the *לִי*, the governour who is set over, to observe the subject-matter of the oath of God; i. e. either that obligation, or oath as it may be called, which he constantly lies under to him who setteth up kings to consult the good of his servants and his people, or that oath which he took at the beginning of his reign not to transgress the laws and statutes of the state. At all events there is no one to whom a king is accountable except the Judge of all the earth who tries the reins and heart; and this is an important rule in politics, that the people should not have power put into their hands to judge the king's conduct whether it be good or bad. For the king properly judges the people, not the people

## THE ELEVENTH SECTION.

אֲנִי פִי-מֶלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר וְעַל דְּבַרְתָּ שְׁבוּעַת אֱלֹהִים: 2

“the king; otherwise the land will never have rest from rebellions against the king and his administration.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. After אֲנִי understand the word מְוַהֲיֶדֶד, or מְצֻנֶּה; or rather אֲמִר, of which there is an ellipsis in Is. v. 9, בְּאַנְי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת. Or possibly אֲנִי may be put here absolutely in the sense, “quod ad me attinet.” “As for me, keep the king’s (my) word.” So in Is. Lix. 21, “אֲנִי וכו’,” “As for me, this is my covenant with them, &c.” Eccles. ii. 15, “As for myself also, it may happen to me.” See also Gen. ix. 9, Exod. xiv. 17, Dan. x. 17. פֶּה is used here for the words which proceed out of the mouth. So in Exod. xvii. 1, “They walked according to the mouth of the Lord,” עַל פִּי יְהוָה.

עַל is separated from דְּבַרְתָּ by the accent זקף גדול, and therefore the two words cannot be equivalent to עַל-דְּבַר as most commentators have supposed; but עַל must be used as a noun of quality here and be equivalent to מוֹשֵׁל, as elsewhere we find it used; thus Hos. vii. 16, וְשׁוּבוּ לֹא עַל; xi. 7, אֵל-עַל יִקְרָאָהוּ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, וַיִּנָּאם הַגִּבּוֹר הַקָּם עַל.

According to Mendlessohn’s ingenious rendering, דְּבַרְתָּ must mean “subject-matter,” “the contents,” or as the Latins say, “verba jurisjurandi,” “vel sacramenti.”

- 3 אֶל-תִּבְהֵל מִפָּנָיו תֵּלֵךְ אֶל-תַּעֲמֹד בְּדָבָר רָע כִּי כָל-  
 4 אִשָּׁר יַחֲפֹץ יַעֲשֶׂה : בְּאִשֶּׁר-דָּבַר-מֶלֶךְ שְׁלֵמוֹן וּמִי  
 5 יֹאמַר-לוֹ מֶה-תַּעֲשֶׂה : שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יֵדַע דָּבָר

Ver. 3. "Thou must not be in haste to go out of his presence, that is, to leave him directly he does anything that displeases thee; and be not a party to the counsels of rebels, in whom is 'framed' an evil design against the king; (Mendlessohn here uses the word יָצוּק in allusion to Psalm xli. 9, 'an evil design is molten (or "cast") in him,' a metaphor from the fusion and casting of metals) "for he can do to thee according to his pleasure, since he is the ruler among his people. He has the supreme power and authority, and there is none but God above him." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. תִּבְהֵל תֵּלֵךְ. Here we have two consecutive verbs unconnected by a conjunction like יִבְאִישׁ יָבִיעַ afterwards. The first must therefore be taken adverbially; "do not go out precipitately, without proper respect." (Such going out would in fact be an announcement of open rebellion, and be the first step to being engaged in a conspiracy דָּבַר רָע). Thus we have 1 Sam. ii. 3, אַל תִּרְבוּ תִדְבְּרוּ, "do not speak much." Job xix. 3, לֹא תִבְשׂוּ מִתְדַּכְּרוּ לִי, "Ye do not make yourselves strange to me in a shame-faced way," i. e. "as if ye were ashamed to do so."

We find the verb עָמַד used in the same sense as here in the first Psalm, "hath not stood in the way of sinners," i. e. "persisted in it," or "been engaged in it."

Ver. 4. "Wherever the word and law of the king extend, there they are authoritative as a fixed decree upon the sons

3 E conspectu ejus ne præproperè exeas; ne in malâ  
 4 re persistas; nam quidquid ei libet facit; quoniam  
 regis verbum est potens; et quis ei dicet, “Quid  
 5 facis?” Qui præceptum *Dei* observat, quasi ne-  
 scibit si verbum *regis* malum sit; sed judicii tem-

“of men, and who shall stay his hand, or say to him, ‘What  
 “doest thou?’ To no man does the right belong of summon-  
 “ing the king to account, or of questioning him as to the reasons  
 “of his conduct.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Here again we have בְּאִשֶּׁר in the sense of “in-  
 asmuch as.”

Ver. 5. “He who keeps the commandments of his God  
 “will not perceive that the word (of the king) is wrong; i. e.  
 “he will obey it as if he did not perceive that it was wrong,  
 “and will not be a party to the counsels of rebels, even though  
 “iniquity be in the breast of the sovereign. And if the king  
 “do wrong, he will submit and not rebel against his commands,  
 “but put his trust in his God, because it is he who setteth up  
 “and removeth kings; and the wise man knows in his own  
 “mind that there is a fixed time of account for every business,  
 “and a judgment for every work; and if the king have not  
 “done right among his people, he will patiently trust in the  
 “Lord and wait his time, as king David said, ‘Who shall put  
 “forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?’  
 “‘But the Lord may smite him (*with plague*); or his day may  
 “come that he shall die; or he may descend into battle and  
 “perish.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. “He who does right will not know,” i. e. he will  
 act as though he did not know that the “word,” i. e. “the  
 king’s word (spoken of in the last verse) is wrong.” “At the  
 same time that he submits quietly as if he did not perceive  
 the wrong of the command, he knows in his own mind that all

pus fore novit mens sapientis. Cuique enim negotio est tempus suum iudicii, malum enim hominum multiplex iis incumbit: ignorat enim quisque 7 quid *sibi* futurum sit; quomodo enim futurum sit quis ei indicabit? (*sive* quis est qui indicet ei?) Nemo auctoritatem habet in ventum, ad ventum cohibendum; nec est *alicui* auctoritas in diem mortis, nec est certa in bello salus (*sive* dimissio)

will hereafter be set right and that even the king will be rewarded according to his deeds, and that he may be brought to his account none can tell how soon by one of the many evils and calamities of mankind."

מִצְוָה is used abstractedly κατ' ἐξοχην. עֵת means here, "a time of account," a doom, as it did in Chap. iii. 17, "for there is a doom for every business and every action there."

Ver. 6, 7. "Behold, many are the plagues incident to the "sons of men, and the king may not escape all of them, for no "one knows what is going to happen, and consequently he "cannot be on his guard against whatever is about to befall "him; and his calamity may come upon him suddenly and in "an instant, so that it would have been impossible for any "one with whom he consulted for his own safety to forewarn "him of it." Mendlesohn.

NOTE. Ver. 6. רַב almost always denotes multiplicity of number, as I have already observed. In several passages above it signified "prevalence" of evil, i. e. the multitude of the cases of it; here the context seems to shew that it rather means the "variety of the species and multiplicity of the forms of calamity incident to man, any one of which may overtake the king."

Ver. 7. The antecedent of the pronominal affix of אֵינֶנִּי



רָע וְעַתּוֹמִשְׁפָּט יִרְעֶה לְבַחֲכֶם : כִּי לְכָל־חַפֵּץ יִשׁ  
 עַתּוֹמִשְׁפָּט כִּי־רָעַת הָאָדָם רַבָּה עָלָיו : כִּי־אֵינָנוּ 7  
 יִרְעֶה מִה־שִּׁיחִיָּה בִּי בְּאִשֶּׁר יִהְיֶה מִי יִגִּיד לוֹ : אֵין 8  
 אָדָם שְׁלִיט בְּרוּחַ לְכָל־אֶת־הָרוּחַ וְאֵין שְׁלֹטוֹן  
 בְּיוֹם הַמָּוֶת וְאֵין מִשְׁלַחַת בַּמְּלַחְמָה וְלֹא־יִמְלֹט רָשָׁע

is necessarily הָאָדָם, "mankind," in ver. (6), so that this verse (7) is not spoken exclusively of a king, as Mendlessolin seems to suppose, but is a general remark illustrative of the variety and multifariousness of human calamity. He says this is so great, that man knows not which of all these evils may befall him, for who is there to tell him how the future will be? The particular application of this remark in the present passage relates indeed to the king, but the primary meaning of it is quite general.

Ver. 8. "He mentions here the three causes of death "which king David enumerates in the verse I have quoted. "He says, 'There is no one who has power over the wind to "restrain it from hurting him.' This corresponds to 'Either "the Lord may smite him (with plague;)' for those who die "of plague die by the wind which carries a pestiferial vapour "from place to place; and this vapour is subtle and not per- "ceptible to the senses; and all the might of the king "and his princes and his servants cannot prevent such wind "from entering the king's bed-chamber and destroying him. "'And there is no exercising authority over the day of death.' "This corresponds to 'or his day may come that he shall die;' "for when the king's time of natural death arrives, all the "glory of his kingdom will not save him. 'And there is no

9 אֶת־בְּעָלָיו : אֶת־כָּל־זֶה רָאִיתִי וְנָתַן אֶת־לִבִּי לְכָל־  
 מַעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר גַּעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם יַעַת אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַט  
 10 הָאָדָם בָּאָדָם לְרַע לוֹ : וּבִבֶּן רָאִיתִי רִשָּׁעִים

“(certain) rescue in war,” corresponds to ‘or he may descend  
 “into battle and perish;’ i. e. in war there is no place of con-  
 “fidence or refuge for the king to save himself in; for ‘rest-  
 “lessness will never save him,’ i. e. restlessness will never pre-  
 “serve him from any of these evils.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. רִשָּׁע means restless anxiety, or that wily disposi-  
 tion which is ever fertile in schemes and resources, a sense in  
 which we have already met with it. בְּעָלָיו means the “subject”  
 of this temper or disposition; literally, “its owner.”

Ver. 9. “I have noticed all this, that an unrighteous go-  
 “vernment will not last for ever, but only for a limited time,  
 “and after that will be done away. For it is neither in accord-  
 “ance with the experience of history nor with reason that the  
 “many should bow submissively to an individual and hearken  
 “to the voice of his words not for their own happiness but their  
 “injury. Such a thing cannot last for ever.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. אֶת־כָּל־זֶה רָאִיתִי refers to the observation he has  
 just been mentioning on the calamities incident to man, any  
 one of which may overtake the unjust prince; “All this,” he  
 says, “I observed,” or “contemplated.”

The ׀ before the infinitive נָתַן is conductive, and signifies  
 “so as,” and the meaning of וְנָתַן אֶת־לִבִּי וכו' is “so as (to  
 be able) to apply my mind to any case that occurs, &c.” i. e.  
 “so as (to be able) to give it a fair consideration.” We find  
 ׀ prefixed to an infinitive in a similar sense at ix. 11, שָׁבֹתִי  
 וְרָאִה, “I returned,” i. e. “I recalled myself so as to observe,

9 nec dominum suum eripiet improbitas. Hæc omnia  
contemplatus sum, quo mentem meam *rectius* ad  
omnia applicarem quæ sub sole facta sint quando  
10 alius in alium in ejus damnum dominatus sit. At  
reverâ quidem exequiis vidi improbos celebrari,

&c.," and sometimes when the infinitive has the לִּי of the  
"בְּכֻלָּם" prefixed to it to distinguish it from an imperative or  
a noun substantive (vid. vii. 25, where תִּיר and יָעַת have  
this prefix, but בִּקֶּשׁ has not), as in ix. 1, וְלִבּוֹר אֶת-כָּל-יָדָהּ,  
"so as to explain all this, &c." and vii. 25, וְלִדְעַת וכו', "so  
as to understand how wickedness, &c." in all which passages  
י must be rendered "so as," and not "in order," because  
it implies that the effect expressed by the verb to which it  
is prefixed was actually produced.

The literal rendering of the last clause is, "Whatever has  
happened under the sun, when one man has ruled over another  
to the injury of the latter." עַת אֲשֶׁר is "when," and שָׁלַט  
an aorist. He now proceeds to say that nevertheless instances  
are to be found when wickedness prospers and virtue suffers  
and when what we should have expected from the above obser-  
vations on human calamities does not take place, and they do  
not light on the head of the unjust ruler, and that the fact of  
such instances existing encourages the thoughtless in rebellion  
against God. He therefore sets himself to explain this paradox.

NOTE. Ver. 10. Mendlessohn says he found this verse ex-  
tremely difficult. He certainly has mistaken the sense of קְבָרִים  
in taking it as a metaphor. He says, "But in fact I have seen  
bad men whose name has now almost perished, who are now  
buried as it were in oblivion, who went on prospering in their  
wickedness and came forth in the pride of their heart from the

qui e sancti loco exhibant eodemque redibant, dum oblivioni in urbe traduntur qui recte fecerunt; et

place of the holy man, i. e. the regal throne, while those men who did right were forgotten in the same city, and were not remembered even in the place which was the scene of their good deeds.' And he concludes by saying that this too was unsatisfactory."

בְּיָן, "in truth," "in fact." Such is the meaning of בְּיָן in Ps. cxxvii. 2, "Truly it is to his beloved ones that he gives sleep," or, (if it have the same sense there as in the phrase below), "Well doth he give sleep to his beloved ones."

It is surely far better to render קְבָרִים "honourably buried," agreeably with the sense of קְבוּרָה in vi. 3, where it can mean nothing but "honourable burial," than to adopt Mendlessohn's forced explanation. Construe "I have seen bad men buried in state, and that they used to come, &c." The ו before בָּאוּ is not conversive because there is no preceding future verb. Mendlessohn renders בּוֹא in the same sense here in which הֹלֵךְ is frequently used, viz. to express the continuousness of an action, as יִלְכֶּה הָלֵךְ וְקָשָׁה, "went on continually and prevailed," i. e. prevailed more and more, Judg. iv. 24, וַיֵּלֶךְ הָלֵךְ, "And he waxed greater and greater," Gen. xxvi. 13, and translates the passage, "They went on prospering and parading in regal splendour." "I have seen the dead who are now buried in oblivion, that they used to go on proceeding in state (incedentes) from the place properly belonging to the holy man." But בּוֹא (which almost always means "to come," in opposition to הֹלֵךְ, "to go,") seems to have been used in this way not by biblical but only by rabbinical writers; and בּוֹא with הֹלֵךְ is used here just as we find it with יָצָא elsewhere, in the sense "to

# קב'ים וְבָאוּ וּמִמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ יִהְיֶיכוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּכְּחוּ בְּעִיר

come in and go out," to express the daily habit of frequenting as a place of residence; (just as a king would be said in Hebrew to go out and come in before the people in that capacity, i. e. to exercise the functions of, and fill the dignities of a king) vid. 1 Sam. xxix. 6. Probably the ו before מִמָּקוֹם acts as a ו conversive, (the words יִהְיֶיכוּ קָדוֹשׁ מִמָּקוֹם may be taken as one word, and to represent a verb) so as to bring the verb יִהְיֶיכוּ into the same tense as בָּאוּ; and the words מִמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ are perhaps placed between the two verbs, instead of the order being וְבָאוּ וַיִּהְיֶיכוּ מִמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ, to shew that מִמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ is to be supplied with בָּאוּ as well as construed with יִהְיֶיכוּ, as we should say, "They went to and from the place;" whereas if וַיִּהְיֶיכוּ had come next to וְבָאוּ, Mendlessohn's rendering would almost necessarily have been right. We find here, "the place of the holy man," used for "the place properly belonging to the holy man," i. e. the place of dignity and trust, just as we had in chap. iii. "the place of justice and right," for "the place where justice and right ought to be, the place properly belonging to them." קָדוֹשׁ need not mean here "a king," but merely a holy and uncorrupt man, such as ought to hold all offices of trust; such as בֶּן עֲשֻׂי, a phrase which is evidently used in the last clause of the verse as synonymous with קָדוֹשׁ. בֶּן not unfrequently signifies "rightly," "aright;" as in 2 Kings vii. 9, Ps. xc. 12, and perhaps exxvii. 2. The verb וַיִּשְׁתַּכְּחוּ being in the Hithpahel expresses that their quiet and unostentatious lives cause them to be forgotten, that "they sink of themselves into oblivion." The future is evidently used in this word as a frequentative tense, as we say, "The bad man will never prosper," for "never prospers."



11 אֲשֶׁר בִּן-עָשׂוֹ גַם-זֶה הָבֵל : אֲשֶׁר אֵין-נַעֲשֶׂה פִתְּנָם  
מַעֲשֵׂה הָרָעָה מִהֲרָה עַל-כֵּן מָלֵא לֵב בְּנֵי-הָאָדָם

The whole of the verse is an objection against Divine providence, and ends, "this too was unsatisfactory;" Solomon proceeds to answer it, in the following passage.

בְּרָעִיר is of course put for בְּהָעִיר, and means, as Mendlessohn says, "In the very city where they had done right."

Ver. 11. "Because men see that that full retribution is "not executed speedily on an evil deed which would be as it "were a sentence on the deed carried into effect, and therefore "an explanation of it, they imagine that there will never be an "account or a judgment, and their heart within them 'is fully "set' (is bold) to do evil.

"אֵין נַעֲשֶׂה פִתְּנָם. Here apparently we have a feminine verb "agreeing with a masculine noun; since the word אֵין shews that "נַעֲשֶׂה must be the participle feminine Niphal. For the participle "masculine is נַעֲשֶׂה, and if the word in the text had been the pre- "terite masculine Niphal, we should have had לֵא instead of אֵין "which never is joined with tenses; and that פִתְּנָם is mascu- "line appears from the passage in Esther i. וְנִשְׁמַע פִתְּנָם, 'And "the decree was heard.' We must therefore either suppose the "vowel-point under שֶׁ to be wrong, or devise some other "construction out of the words, as making רָעָה agree with "נַעֲשֶׂה." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. This verse may either be a further objection against the inequality of condition of the good and bad, on the ground that it forms an encouragement to men to do wrong boldly, or, which is more probable, be a part of the answer to the objection in the first verse; and the general sense would then be, "many men encourage themselves in bad practices from observing

hæc quidem res irrita est (*vel* hujus vitæ imper-  
 11 fectio). Quod nulla fit quoad sententiam de male-  
 facto latam festinatio, idcirco animosiores ad male-

that evil deeds do not meet with immediate recompense;" "but," he says, "they do not view the matter in its true light, for though the sinner be allowed to go on sinning a long time, and enjoy somewhat of the transitory blessings of this life, it will in the end be best for those who fear God, and in a future state all will be set right."

פִּתְגָם is the Chaldee for "a decree," or "sentence;" vid. Esth. i. 20, Dan. iv. 14, Ezra v. 37. Mendlessolin seems to take it to mean more than "the sentence," viz. the "execution of it," which, as he implies, would be a sort of explanation of the permission of evil under the Divine government, the punishment of it explaining this paradox. There is nothing in the sentence for נַעֲשֶׂה to agree with but מְהֵרָה, and if it does the sense is, "because no speed is made with respect to the execution of the sentence as to a deed of evil," i. e. "on an evil deed," פִּתְגָם and מַעֲשֵׂה הָרָעָה being placed absolutely, for פִּתְגָם is not the construct form. Some say that after פִּתְגָם the same word should be supplied in a state of construction with מַעֲשֵׂה, as in Ps. lx. 5, "Thou has made us to drink wine, astonishment;" i. e. wine, the wine of astonishment, for it is יַין, and not יֵין; and in Job xxxi. 11, עֵין פִּלְלִים, where עֵין is not in a state of construction; and then the sense here would be, "the sentence, the sentence of an evil deed." But this is unnecessary. The expression, "no haste is made," is equivalent to, "God does not hasten," and the clause means, "because God does not hasten the execution of the sentence on an evil deed." For instances of nouns placed absolutely vid. vii. 26.

ficere audendum fiunt homines. Licet peccator centies malefaciat, ac diu porrigat ei *Deus veniam*, (vel “et diu ei *dies* porrigat,”) nihilominus ego scio Deum reverentibus bene futurum esse quod eum revereantur. Idcircone autem fieri non potest ut bonâ utatur improbus fortunâ et vitam suam, sicut umbram illam quidem *fluxam*, producat, quia

מָלֵא is an adjective. “Their heart is full to do evil,” i. e. “they dare to do it.” So Esth. vii. 5, “Who is he (אִשֶּׁר מָלֵא) (לְבוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן) who is full as to his heart (dares) to do thus?”

Observe that מַעֲשֵׂה is in construction with the substantive רָעָה which follows it.

Ver. 12. “Supposing that the sinner does evil a hundred times, and God is long-suffering to him, and does not take vengeance on him, that is no wonder in the eyes of the intelligent man; for I know too that in the end every one will receive his due reward.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. After מֵאֲרִיךְ understand אָפוּ; and construe, “God prolongs his forbearance to him.” (“Long of nose,” and “short of nose,” in Hebrew mean, “patient or long-suffering,” “and violent or impatient” respectively.) Or else understand יָמָיו.

With מֵאֵת understand פַּעַם, “times.” כִּי גַם is, “but still,” i. e. “nevertheless.” “I know that their fearing God will turn out to the good of those who fear him.”

Ver. 13. “If then the fear of God brings abiding prosperity and substantial happiness to man, why should not he who has not that fear of God possess at least apparent good, and prosperity fallacious as a dream that vanishes away? For if there were no transitory happiness, no semblance of good connected with the wickedness of sinners, man would be almost

12 בָּהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע : אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עֲשֶׂה רָע מֵאֵת 12  
 וּמֵאַרְיֵךְ לוֹ בִּי גַם-יִוְדַע אֲנִי אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה-טוֹב לִירְאִי  
 13 הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִירָאוּ מִלִּפְנֵיו : וְטוֹב לֹא-יִהְיֶה 13  
 לָרָשָׁע וּלֹא-יֵאָרִיךְ יָמִים בְּצֵל אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנו יֵרָא מִלִּפְנֵי

“necessitated to do good and eschew evil in his actions; for if  
 “a man were to eat gall and wormwood by choice, when regal  
 “dainties were spread before him, he would not be called a sin-  
 “ner but a fool or a madman; and so it is with good and evil;  
 “if good were always pleasant and agreeable, and evil offensive  
 “and bitter, the man who does evil would not be a sinner but  
 “an infatuated person, and the denial of man’s free agency  
 “would almost necessarily follow. Hence evil must of necessity  
 “be sometimes sweet and pleasant for an hour; while all the  
 “time it is in itself a mere apparent good and a fleeting pros-  
 “perity which has nothing substantial in it. Thus the sense of  
 “these two verses will be, ‘I know that it will be a real good  
 “to the fearers of God that they stand in awe of him; and  
 “why should not the wicked have happiness and length of  
 “days which is only as a shadow which vanishes and passes  
 “away, because he does not fear God? It is strange that the  
 “contrary should be expected.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn is the only commentator who has per-  
 ceived that this verse ought to be read with a note of interro-  
 gation. The words וְלֹא-יֵאָרִיךְ יָמָיו בְּצֵל must be taken together  
 to mean, “nor have a long life, a transitory and fleeting thing  
 at the longest,” “which is still a mere shadow.” Or we may  
 take בְּצֵל to mean “a shelter,” as it has already done; “nor  
 have a long life as his shelter and only trust; (which must come

14 אֱלֹהִים : יֵשׁ-הֶבֶל אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר וַיֵּשׁ  
 צַדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר מַגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַרְשָׁעִים וַיֵּשׁ  
 רָשָׁעִים שֶׁמַּגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיקִים אֲמַרְתִּי  
 15 שָׁנִים-זֶה הָבֵל : וַשְּׁבַחְתִּי אֲנִי אֶת-הַשְּׁמָחָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין-  
 טוֹב לָאָדָם תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ כִּי אִם-לָאֵכָל וּלְשִׂתוֹת  
 וּלְשִׂמּוֹחַ וְהוּא יִלְוֶנוּ בַּעֲמָלוֹ יָמֵי חַיָּו אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן-לּוֹ  
 16 הָאֱלֹהִים תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ : בְּאֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי אֶת-לִבִּי לָדַעַת

to an end).” Dathe neglects the accents altogether, and renders thus from כִּצֵּל, “*Umbrae similis est, qui nullam Dei habet reverentiam.*” (He has done well in the next verse in perceiving at last that הֶבֶל sometimes means in this book, “an unsatisfactory circumstance in the world,” “*imperfectio hujus vitæ.*”)

Ver. 14. “It is true that this unsatisfactory state of things “exists upon the earth, that there are righteous men to whom “it happens as if they had done the deeds of the wicked, and “vice versâ; but this fallacious and transitory prosperity of the “evil-doers is no evidence at all with respect to true felicity, “and those who are to enjoy it.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon is repeating the argument against the Divine providence, “that the relative condition of the good and bad is very unsatisfactory,” and he states in the following verses the inference he had formerly drawn from this argument before he took a more enlarged view of the Divine government, as including both this world and the next, or which he would have drawn from if he had only contemplated this life without taking the next into account.



14 Deum haud reveretur? “Est quidem,” *dicebam*,  
 “res irrita (*vel* imperfectio hujus vitæ) quæ fit in  
 terrâ, quod sint justî quibus accidunt improborum  
 factis digna, atque improbi quibus accidunt justor-  
 um factis digna.” Dicebam hanc rem irritam (*vel*  
 15 vitæ imperfectionem) esse; laudabamque lætiti-  
 am, “quippe nil esse homini sub sole bonum, præter-  
 quam edere, ac bibere, ac lætari, quodque hoc apud  
 eum maneret in labore ejus per dies vitæ ejus quam  
 16 sub sole dederit ei Deus;” dum mentem meam ad  
 cognoscendam sapientiam applicabam laboriosum is-

Ver. 15, 16. “These two verses must be taken together. He  
 “says, ‘While I applied myself to understand moral philosophy  
 “and practical wisdom so as to know the way in which a man  
 “should proceed in order to attain happiness, and at the same  
 “time confined myself to the contemplation of the matters which  
 “take place upon the earth, i. e. so long as I formed my judg-  
 “ment on this subject only from what passes under our daily  
 “observation with respect to it, viz. the unavoidable chance  
 “which attends the sons of men on the earth, even if they  
 “labour incessantly by day and night, and sleep be driven from  
 “their eyes by reason of the multitude of their anxieties; as  
 “long as I did this, I was for choosing the opinion of men of  
 “pleasure and praising mirth, for that there was no good under  
 “the sun but eating and drinking and merriment.’” Mendles-  
 sohn.

NOTE. Ver. 15. אֲשֶׁר means, “as though,” in this place.  
 יִלְוֶה is put for לוֹ יִלְוֶה, “adhere to him,” i. e. “continue with  
 him;” like יִגְרֶה, Ps. v. 5, for עִמָּהּ.

Ver. 16. בְּאִשֶּׁר is put for בְּעֵת אֲשֶׁר, “at the time that,”

tud opus *solum* contemplando quod in terrâ fit, quandoquidem nec diu nec etiam noctu somnum oculis ejus ullum videat. Itaque contemplatus sum <sup>17</sup> totum opus Dei; operis enim quod sub sole fit non potest homo rationem comperire; quandoquidem in exquirendo laborat nec tamen comperit; immo licet eam se putet sapiens intelligere non <sup>CAP. IX.</sup> (reverâ) potest comperire. Namque hanc omnem 1

i. e. "when."  $\text{כִּי}$  is a preposition of time; as in Numb. xxiii. 23,  $\text{בְּעֵת}$ , "at the time," i. e. "at the time appointed by God," which divination cannot affect.

"To learn wisdom and to observe, &c." is equivalent to, "to learn wisdom by observing, &c."

The commentators differ as to the rendering of the words  $\text{כִּי אֲנִי}$ . Mendlessohn evidently renders them  $\text{אֲנִי אֲנִי}$ , i. e. "even if," "even though," agreeably with the sense of  $\text{כִּי}$  in iv. 14, "Although he came out of the house of bondmen," and so in Exod. v. 11, "Although none of your work shall be diminished, &c." And the sense will then be, "While I applied myself to learn practical wisdom in contemplating the (vanity of the) business done under the sun, even though a man labours incessantly day and night, I approved of mirth." (We find  $\text{עֲנִין}$  used exactly in this way at i. 13 of this book, where he is pointing out the futility of all human occupations, and where as well as in this verse in speaking of the "business which is done under the sun" he intends to express the vanity of it, which as we find in the first chapter had led him to make trial of pleasure.) Others render  $\text{כִּי אֲנִי}$  "since even."  $\text{עֲנִין}$  must then imply "laborious employment," a sense which I am not inclined to give to it, and the translation will be that which I have given in my Latin version, viz. "When I applied my-

חֲכָמָה וְלִרְאוּת אֶת-הָעֵנָן אֲשֶׁר גַּעֲשָׂה עַל-הָאָרֶץ כִּי  
 גַּם בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה שִׁנָּה בְּעֵינָיו אֵינְנו רֹאֶה : וְרָאִיתִי 17  
 אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לֹא יוּכַל הָאָדָם לְמָצוֹא  
 אֶת-הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר גַּעֲשָׂה תַּחַת-הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּשֵׁל אֲשֶׁר  
 יַעֲמַל הָאָדָם לְבַקֵּשׁ וְלֹא יִמָּצֵא וְגַם אִם-יֵאמֶר  
 הֶחָכֶם לָדַעַת לֹא יוּכַל לְמָצֵא : כִּי אֶת-כָּל-זֶה 1

CHAP.  
IX.

self to learn practical wisdom in contemplating the toilsome work that is done under the sun, for that man even rests not night or day, but labours incessantly.”

Ver. 17. “But I turned back and said, ‘If I wish to understand even a portion of the ways of providence, I must necessarily make myself acquainted with the whole of the works of God, as to what they have been and what they will be in this world and in the world to come. For man cannot attain the understanding of anything of the ways of Divine providence if he only make himself acquainted with the work done under the sun; for that is like a dream without an interpretation, or a question without an answer; and man will not become acquainted with the true explanations of actions and the sentence (of the Deity) upon them, if he does not exalt his knowledge to what is remote, and what shall take place when time is at an end.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. בְּשֵׁל אֲשֶׁר is for בְּאֲשֶׁר לְאֲשֶׁר, “in respect of that,” i. e. “inasmuch as,” “since.” In Jonah i. 12, בְּשֵׁלִי is for בְּאֲשֶׁר לִי, in respect of me, “on my account;” compare Jonah i. 8, בְּאֲשֶׁר לְמִי, “in respect of whom,” i. e. “on account of whom.”

אָמַר means again, “to think with oneself.”

Ver. 1. “He proceeds to explain how it is impossible for

נִתַּתִּי אֶל-לְבִי וְלָבוֹר אֶת-כָּל-זֶה אֲשֶׁר הַצְדִּיקִים  
וְהַחֲכָמִים וְעֲבָדֵיהֶם בְּיַד הָאֱלֹהִים גַּם-אֶהְבֶּה גַם-  
2 שְׁנָאָה אֵין יוֹדֵעַ הָאָדָם הַכֹּל לַפְּנִיָּהֶם: הַכֹּל כַּאֲשֶׁר  
לְכֹל מְקוֹה אַחֵד לַצַּדִּיק וְלַרָּשָׁע לַטּוֹב וְלַפְּחוֹז

“a wise man to comprehend anything of the works or ways  
“of God, if he only direct his attention to what takes place  
“under the sun. He says, ‘All these considerations I laid to  
“heart in order fully to explain this, that the good and their  
“actions are all in the hand of God, under his care and provi-  
“dence, and yet that if a man considers only the contingencies  
“of this life and confines his attention to them, he cannot know  
“whether he is an object of love or hatred with the great God,  
“for that every thing he sees before him and about him bears  
“a uniform aspect and character as if God did not interfere  
“with human affairs.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The first אֶת-כָּל-זֶה probably refers to the con-  
sideration mentioned in the last verse, that if we would satis-  
factorily understand moral phenomena we must contemplate the  
next world as well as the present; and he says, “I laid to  
heart, I took into account all this consideration so as to be able  
to investigate fully and satisfactorily the following paradox, that  
though the righteous are in the hands of God, there is nothing  
in the events and contingencies of this life to assure us whom  
God loves or hates, or, in other words, there is no display of his  
love to the good or his hatred to the wicked, for that the same  
chances happen to all. The ׀ before לָבוֹר is merely conductive  
as I said at viii. 9, “וְנִתָּן וְכוּ”, and וְלָבוֹר means, “so as to ex-  
plain,” as at verse 11 of this chapter וְרָאָה meant “so as to  
observe.”

rationem ad mentem meam applicui ad totam hanc rem accurate disquirendam, scilicet “justos et sapientes et opera eorum in manu esse Dei, sed, quoad quæcunque illis ante oculos sint, tum amorem Ejus tum odium neminem hominum posse cognoscere; etenim omnia *cuique* similiter ac *reliquis* omnibus evenire; eundem casum justo accidere

The Targumist renders עֲבָדֵיהֶם by the Chaldee עובדיהן, (עברה in Chaldee being the same as מַעֲשֵׂה); and this is right; for if the word meant “servants,” (i. e. disciples), the pointing of it would be this עֲבָדֵיהֶם, like מְלִיכָהֶם and רִגְלֵיהֶם; but with the kametz-gadol under the ב it must be the plural of עֲבָדָה, “a work.”

גַּם...גַּם are equivalent to the Latin “tum”...“tum,” as we find them again in ver 6, infra.

We must supply “whereas,” or, “and yet,” before the second clause of the verse. The Hebrew language is often very abrupt.

“The righteous are in the hand of God,” means that they must necessarily be under his special favour, and that it rests with him to reward and bless them.

We must supply “of God” after אֱהָבָה, from the last אֱלֹהִים.

הַכֹּל is put absolutely, “as to all before them,” i. e. “as far as they can gather from observation on all that takes place in their time.” See Notes at i. 10, and ii. 7.

Ver. 2. “הַכֹּל בְּאִשֶּׁר לָכֵל” means, ‘Every thing happens “to each individual just as to all the rest, and there is no difference made between the good and the bad, &c.’ כְּטֹב כְּרָעָא “is the same construction as כְּמֹנִי כְּמוֹךָ, ‘I am as thou art;’ כְּעַמִּי כְּעַמֶּךָ, ‘My people as thy people.’” Mendlessohn.



et improbo, bono puroque et impuro, sacra facienti et ei qui non sacrificet; probum esse sicut peccatorem, jusjurandum reformidantem sicut jurantem; et hoc 3 sane malum esse in omnibus quæ sub sole fiant rebus, quod idem sit omnibus casus, atque animus insuper hominum malitiâ plenus, et vesaniæ sint per

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Ver. 3. "If the matter were finally left as it is in this "world without any interpretation, as it were, of the dream, it "would certainly be an absolute and unmixed evil for the same "chance to happen to all, and that it should be as we see it is "in the world, that there is no difference between the well-doer "and the evil-doer, and that the righteousness of the righteous "and the wickedness of the wicked should be like a fleeting "dream without profit to the good, or harm to the sinner. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Far be it "from God to sanction evil, and from the Almighty to permit "injustice; and yet since it must be allowed that greater wrong "and evil and injustice cannot be conceived than for the same "accidents to happen under all circumstances to the righteous "and the wicked without any difference or respect of persons, "it would follow according to this view of the subject, (heaven "forgive the thought!) that God would be perverting justice in "his dealings with the righteous on the one hand, and that with "respect to the prosperous sinner on the other the permission "of evil would be attributable to the Deity, if we do not believe "in the immortality of the soul and future retribution: for "that this too would be a great evil and wrong that the heart "of the sons of men should be full of evil, and madness should "be in their hearts while they live, and after that they should "go to the dead, i. e. should return to the grave and perish for "ever, and not be chastened or tried as silver is tried that they

וְלִפְתָּא וְלִזְבָּח וְלִאֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ זֹבַח בְּטוֹב בְּחַטָּא  
הַנִּשְׁפָּע בְּאֲשֶׁר שְׂבוּעָה יָרָא : זֶה רָע בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-3  
נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בִּי-מִקְרָה אַחֵר לְכָל יוֹם לֵב  
בְּנִי-הָאָדָם מֵא-רָע וְהוֹלִלּוֹת בְּלִבָּם בְּחַיֵּיהֶם

“ may know and perceive that they did not do good, but went  
“ after vanity without distinguishing between apparent good and  
“ that which is real and substantial. Surely this would not be  
“ the work of a wise being to create intelligent souls, the glory  
“ and ornament of creation, and leave them to be full of evil  
“ and madness for a few years, and after that to go to the  
“ grave, and perish hopelessly and irrecoverably. Is it pos-  
“ sible either that God should form a creature merely to injure  
“ it and wreak upon it an irreparable vengeance, or that there  
“ should be found under the government of the Lord of mercies  
“ a living being whose condition is completely and absolutely  
“ miserable?” (as would be the case if there were no hope of  
an hereafter to make up for the inconsistencies of this present  
life.) Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon is drawing a melancholy picture of the  
condition of man as viewed with respect to this life only, which  
is one of such unmitigated evil that a future state is necessary  
in order “to justify the ways of God with man.” The sense  
is continuous from verse 1. of this chapter, and through several  
verses which follow. They are all in the *obliqua oratio*. The  
evils which he details in them are the difficulty which he says in  
verse 1. he had explained by taking a future state into account,  
and are included under לָבוֹר אֶת-כָּל-יְוָה.

Rosenmuller would render נִם in this verse “consequently,”  
agreeably with the verse, “Because the sentence on an evil

וְאַחֲרָיו אֶל-הַמֵּתִים : בִּי-מִי אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר אֵל כָּל-  
הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן כִּי-לִבָּלֵב הִי הוּא טוֹב מִן-הָאָרֶץ 4

deed is not speedily executed, the sons of men are bold to evil;" but perhaps it is better as Mendlessohn does to take the clause beginning with וְגַם as expressing an additional remark on the evils of the world, that besides the indiscriminating sweep of accident and calamity which includes the good equally with the bad, the sons of men should be full of evil, malice, and wickedness while they live, and then die without hope, a truly miserable end of a wretched life, for if death be annihilation the most wretched life is preferable, as he proceeds to say in the next verse. It may also be implied, as Mendlessohn says, that it would be an evil for the sons of men to be wicked here, and not meet with the due reward of their actions in a future state; but on this interpretation it is difficult to trace the connexion of argument between this verse and the following indicated by the conjunction כִּי at the beginning of the latter. "Evil" and "madness" are probably only mentioned here as internal sources of misery in the world, i. e. of mental misery especially, the "accidents" expressing the external sources of physical misery; and the whole verse might be paraphrased thus, "This surely would be an evil state of things in the world, that externally we should all be liable to the same chances, and internally, we should be miserable from the effects of sin, and this all our lives, and that after that the grave should be our only prospect."

Ver. 4. " 'Whoever he be who shall be chosen.' יִבְחַר, 'the Keri on this word is יִחְבֵּר. The meaning according to 'the Chetib is, 'Whoever you may choose of the sons of men, 'even if he be the most abject, and afflicted, (as degraded

vitam in corde eorum, et postmodo ad mortuos  
 4 abeant : quilibet enim eligeretur, fiduciam esse cunctis  
 viventibus quod ‘cani vivo melius sit quam mortuo

“ among men as the dog among animals) still he must be to  
 “ all men a confidence, i. e. a sign and a proof that a live dog  
 “ however degraded and scornfully treated is better off than the  
 “ noblest of animals when dead ; in other words, that the most  
 “ abject life is better than that death which has no life after it,  
 “ and that this is an evil and a punishment which nothing can  
 “ exceed ; the word יֵשׁ being used here for יֵשְׁנֵנִי, ‘ he is.’ The  
 “ accents render it necessary to take אֵל כָּל־רִחִיִּים as part of  
 “ the predicate of the sentence, and therefore as connected with  
 “ יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן, and not as connected with יִבְחַר אִשָּׁר or  
 “ forming part of the subject of the sentence. If we read  
 “ יִבְחַר with the Chetib, the rendering will be, ‘Whoever is  
 “ made up of body and soul, whoever has the two parts of  
 “ our nature in union and not yet dissolved by death, how-  
 “ ever degraded his condition, is an evidence to all living, &c.’  
 “ and the general sense is the same.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon is here expressing the misery of dissolution by death, if we do not believe in a future state and regard ourselves merely as living the life of beasts, as is implied by his using the adage contained in this verse, which is an ancient Arabic proverb mentioned by Golius in his Adagia, Cent. II. No. 3. “ It would be an evil thing surely that we should live miserably here without recompense for virtue, and full of malice and wickedness, and then die ; an end to which the most wretched life would be preferable ; for take whom you will, all are sure that even he the most abject of men is better off than the most noble of the human race, if the latter have already died the death of the beast, and perished body and soul.” It is unneces-

leoni;’ nam scire quidem viventes se morituros 5  
 esse; mortuos vero nil prorsus scire; nec esse am-  
 plius iis mercedem, quasi periisset eorum memoria;  
 tum amorem tum odium invidiamque eorum dudum 6

sary to take **יש** in any but its ordinary sense of “there is.” “Take any living man, ... there is confidence to all; i. e. all are sure, that he is better off than a dead man however illustrious in life, if he be now annihilated;” “quilibet eligeretur” being parenthetic; and “eligeretur” in the imperative of the obliqua oratio.

The literal translation of the phrase **לְכֹלֵב חַי הוּא טוֹב** מִן־הָאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת is, “As for a live dog he is better off than a dead lion.” We have several times had **טוֹב מִן** in the sense “better off than;” and of the construction **לְכֹלֵב חַי**, (which is taken absolutely and means, “as to a live dog”), we have several other instances, as **לְמֶלֶךְ וְכוּ**, 2 Kings vii. 2, which means “as to the king he leaned,” as appears from 2 Kings v. 18, and Ps. xvi. 3, **לְקִדְשִׁים**, “as for the saints.” The above sense may be expressed in Latin by “*melius est cani vivo quam leoni mortuo*,” or in Greek, “*κυνὶ ζῶντι βέλτιον ἐστὶν ἢ λεοντὶ τεθνηκοτι*,” but it would be incorrect to construe the passage thus, **הוּא טוֹב**, “it is better,” (i. e. “there is a more enviable lot”) **לְכֹלֵב חַי**, “to a live dog,” **מִן־הָאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת**, “than to a dead lion;” because the construction of **מִן־הָאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת** thus becomes imperfect, and **הוּא**, not **הוּא**, is the Hebrew for “it.”

Ver. 5. “For the living know indeed that they must die; “and in spite of all the distress and apprehension involved in this “knowledge, it is better than being dead and without knowledge “altogether; for the destruction of the soul is the very con- “summation of evil to a rational being; and those who are “absolutely annihilated with the destruction of the soul know “nothing at all, and have no longer any reward, but are just



הַמֶּת : כִּי הַחַיִּים יוֹדְעִים שִׁמְתּוֹ וְהַמֵּתִים אֵינָם 5  
 יוֹדְעִים מְאוּמָּה וְאֵין-עוֹר לָהֶם שָׂכָר כִּי נִשְׁכַּח  
 זְכָרָם : גַּם אֶהְבַּתָּם גַּם-שִׁנְאַתָּם גַּם-קִנְיָתָם כִּבְר 6

“as if the very memory of them were forgotten (as far as they themselves are concerned).” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. If their posthumous fame be ever so great, on the above hypothesis they are unconscious of it, so that it is no reward to them for their labour and toil in life.

Observe that this as well as the verses which precode and follow it are to be read as in the obliqua oratio (a very important feature in my new version of this part of the book); they all contain a statement of the inexplicable evils of the condition of man upon earth on the hypothesis that there is no future state, i. e. of the difficulties of which a more enlarged view of the providence of God in the next world as well as in this had furnished the solution. It cannot of course, even on that hypothesis, be said of all the dead that their memory is forgotten; and the meaning of the last clause must be, “the dead know nothing at all, so that they have no longer any reward *in fame*, as if the remembrance of them were forgotten;” i. e. “just as if the very memory of them were actually extinct, because if they are annihilated in death, no posthumous reputation can be of any value to them.” שָׂכָר means literally, “wages.”

Ver. 6. “All their works and actions, and the conceptions of their minds are as though they had never been; their love and their hatred have perished, their hope and their fear, their pride and their clamour have consumed away like smoke.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I have chosen here to render חֵלְקֵי-בָּ, “profit from,”

אֲבָדָה וְחֶלֶק אֵין-לָהֶם עוֹד לְעוֹלָם בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-  
7 גַּעֲשֶׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: לֵךְ אֲכַל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחֲמֹךְ  
וּשְׂתֵה בְּלֵב-טוֹב יִינֹךְ כִּי כָבֹד רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-  
8 מַעֲשֶׂיךָ: בְּכָל-עֵת יִהְיוּ בְּגִדֶיךָ לְבָנִים וְשֹׁמֵן עַל-  
9 רֹאשְׁךָ אֶל-יַחֲסֹר: רֹאֵה חַיִּים עִם-אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-אָהַבְתָּ  
כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּי הַבְּלִיָּה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לְךָ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם כֹּל  
יְמֵי הַבְּלִיָּה כִּי הוּא חָלָקְךָ בְּחַיִּים וּבַעֲמָלְךָ אֲשֶׁר-  
10 אָתָּה עֹמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יֵדְךָ

rather than, "portion in," as this is more in accordance with other passages in this book where the same word occurs.

Ver. 7. "If there were nothing at all after death certainly "men of pleasure would be in the right, in that they eat luxuriously, and drink, and carouse all their days, while they say, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;' so that agreeably with this perishable doctrine it would be proper to address a man in the words of this verse, 'Go eat thy bread in cheerfulness, &c., for God hath already approved of thy conduct, and given it his full consent, and thou art not about to undergo judgment and account before him.'" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. If there be no judgment to come, God may be said to have already and beforehand given his consent and approbation to anything we may do, in having implanted in us the inclination or propensity to do it without designing to call us to account for it, and we are not in a state of probation, but free and unaccountable agents.

periisse; nec fructum iis amplius esse in æternum ex  
 7 omnibus quæ sub sole fiant rebus: iret igitur et come-  
 deret quisque lætus panem suum, ac biberet hilari  
 corde vinum suum, quippe cujus jamdudum Deus  
 8 facta comprobaverit; essent vestes ejus semper can-  
 9 didæ, neque deesset ejus capiti unguentum; frueretur  
 vitâ cum feminâ quam amet omnibus diebus vitæ suæ  
 evanidæ quos sub sole ei dederit *Deus*, omnibus, *in-*  
*quam*, evanidis suis diebus, utpote cujus hic fructus sit  
 10 e vitâ, eque labore suo quo sub sole fungatur; ageret  
 quicquid comperiverit (*vel* invenerit manus sua) in po-  
 testate suâ agendi esse, siquidem non sit in Orco quò

י must be rendered here “as if,” (as it was in verse 5), because the passage is in obliqua oratio, and the last clause of this verse means “As if God had not placed thee here in a state of probation, and were not going to call thee to account.” So in ver. 10, “as if there were no work, &c.” or “for that there is no work,” which means the same; see Mendlessohn’s Preface, p. 89.

Ver. 8. “ ‘Always wear clean and white garments, and let “thy head be supplied with good oil.” Mendlessohn.

Ver. 9. “In the opinion of those who deny the immortality of the soul, these sensual gratifications must be the only “profit a man can gain from this life, or by the labour which “he performs.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. “Life of thy vanity” means “thy transitory life,” as it has already done. י again means “as if,” or “for that.”

Ver. 10. “For is it not the case according to that doctrine “that there is no action or reflection or knowledge or wisdom “in the grave whither thou art going? Do then all that is “in thy power to beautify and adorn thyself, even though it be

vadat vel negotium vel ratiocinatio vel scientia vel sapientia." Revertebar ad hoc sub sole observandum, 11  
 "non semper velocibus contingere cursûs victoriam, nec belli fortibus, nec sapientibus victum, nec sollertibus divitias, nec doctis favorem, sed fatum casum-

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"wrong and violence, rapacity or oppression. And what matter  
 "if it be? Thou wilt come at last to die and descend into the  
 "grave, so that thy only portion is whatever thou canst gain in  
 "this thy transitory life. Follow therefore without restraint the  
 "devices of thy own heart, swear, lie, kill, steal, commit  
 "adultery, deny thyself scarcely any enjoyment. See now to  
 "what a conclusion these arguments tend; how thou wilt thus  
 "sink lower and lower, and be swallowed up at last in the  
 "depths of fatal doctrines if thou wilt not believe in the im-  
 "mortality of the soul and recompense in the life to come." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I have substituted the third person for the second in the Latin version of verses 7, 8, 9, 10, in order that they might be kept in the obliqua oratio, and "quisque" for "tu," which is addressed to mankind in general. "Iret," "frueretur," &c. are therefore equivalent to imperatives.

Ver. 11. "He here proceeds to fortify himself with powerful arguments against him who denies the immortality of the soul, and says, 'I saw on the other hand that even men of pleasure do not always attain to all their desires and wishes in this world, and that oftentimes all their labour is in vain, and their industry terminates in confusion; for since they do not believe in an over-ruling providence they are a mark, as it were, for the arrows of chance and accident, and every thing must happen to them fortuitously, because in the hand

לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכַחַד עֲשֵׂה בִּי אֵין מַעֲשֶׂה וְחִשְׁבֹּן וְרָעַת  
 11 וְחִכְמָה בְּשִׂאֹל אֲשֶׁר אֵתָה הַלֵּךְ שָׁמָּה: שְׁבִתִּי וְרָאָה  
 תַּחַת-הַשָּׁמַיִשׁ בִּי לֹא לַקָּלִים הַמְרוֹזִין וְלֹא לַגְּבוּרִים  
 הַמְלַחֲמָה וְגַם לֹא לַחֲכָמִים לַחֵם וְגַם לֹא לַגְּנִיִּים  
 עֲשֶׂר וְגַם לֹא לַיָּדָעִים חֵן בִּי-עֵת וּפָגַע יִקְרָה אֶת-

“of man there is no power to effect anything with certainty,”  
 “and consequently the recommendation to ‘do all that thou  
 “findest to be in thy power to do,’ must be altogether vain  
 “and nugatory.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. We have here again the conductive וְ before רָאָה.  
 “I turned back, I recalled myself so as to observe that to  
 act even in this world on the short-sighted doctrine detailed  
 above is practically impossible, for that man cannot make sure  
 of anything which he seeks to secure or enjoy, but is altogether  
 the creature of chance and accident; so that without belief in a  
 future state our condition here is truly deplorable.” We find  
 from the above remarks of Mendlessohn that he translates the  
 first clause of the last verse thus, “Whatever thy hand finds to  
 be in thy power to do, do;” a rendering better in accordance  
 with the accents (by which the words לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכַחַד  
 תְּמַצֵּא יָדְךָ are closely connected together) than the usual translation,  
 “Whatever thy hand finds to do, do with all thy might.” (The  
 phrase “Whatever thy hand findeth,” is equivalent to “What-  
 ever thou findest,” יָד being put for a man’s active powers; see  
 1 Sam. xxv. 8, Lev. xii. 8.) Mendlessohn’s rendering is to be  
 preferred for the following reason. כַּחַ always means “ability,”  
 “power,” not “might” or “strength,” and בְּכַחַד must there-  
 fore signify, “within the compass of thy ability,” “in thy  
 power,” not “to the utmost of thy strength and might.” The



12 כָּלָם : כִּי גַם לֹא-יֵלֶע הָאָדָם אֶת-עֲתֹו בְּדָגִים  
 שְׁנֵאֵחָזִים בְּמִצּוֹרָה רָעָה וּבְצִפְלִים הָאֲחֻזּוֹת בְּפֶחַח  
 בָּהֶם יִקְשִׁים בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לַעֲת רָעָה בְּשֶׁתְּפוּל  
 עֲלֵיהֶם פְּתָאֵם :

latter should be its sense if we construe it with עֲשֵׂה, since this verse is clearly a recommendation to make the most of this life if there be none after it, not a warning against attempting anything that is not in our power. But if we construe it with לַעֲשׂוֹת the clause will have the sense which the context requires, "Do all in thy power to do," "all thou possibly canst," and בְּכֹחֶךָ bear its true meaning.

The phrase, "The race is not to the swift," &c. means, "It is not necessarily won by him because he is swift," &c.

קַל is "light," like the Latin "expeditus." הֵן means, "popular favour," and may be rendered, "popularity."

Ver. 12. "He here compares the sons of men to birds "and fishes which unwittingly fall into a snare, and there is "none to say, 'Restore.' There is none to pity them or have "compassion on them, for that was the purpose for which they "were created, and such would be the actual condition of the "sons of men if there were no judgment and no reckoning "before Him who spake and the world was made. And now "after all these reflections go and consider with thyself how "much perplexity and confusion is necessarily brought upon "thee, if thou dost not believe that the soul will exist after the "death of the body, and that it is about to give an account "and a reckoning before the King of kings. Is it not an evil "thing and bitter to have left the fountain of living waters, "the waters of truth, which fail not? If there be nothing at "all after death, (heaven forgive the thought!) God has created

12 que his omnibus accidere; nescire enim hominem fatum suum, sicut pisces qui capiantur reti exitiali, et sicut aves quæ tendiculâ teneantur, sicut illas irretiri homines tempore fatali, ubi iis inopinanter inciderit.”

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“his world only to injure intelligent creatures; and what be-  
 “comes then of the glory of God for which he created all of  
 “them? Where is his great mercy and kindness to all his  
 “works if he only created the choicest of creatures in order to  
 “injure him? Very much to our present purpose is what a  
 “wise poet has said, ‘The Creator has left us the fountain of  
 “life, in reserving for us blessing for our souls.’ Thereby we  
 “can comfort ourselves about the vanity of terrestrial things,  
 “and the painfulness of the defects in our condition; there God  
 “will judge the righteous and the wicked, and each will re-  
 “ceive the just reward of his actions. There there is a doom  
 “for every business and for every work.

“I have now placed you in possession of what I conceive to  
 “be the true meaning of the wise man in the above passage.  
 “For surely he did not aim therein at exciting doubt in the  
 “mind of the believer, but rather at placing truth on its basis,  
 “and establishing the true faith in the soul of the intelligent  
 “man; since the belief here developed is the foundation and  
 “radical principle of our Holy Law, as is known to every one  
 “who is called by the name of Israel.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I have rendered נַעַם in the first clause of this  
 verse by “doom,” which expresses the idea actually conveyed  
 by this word as placed absolutely and without any other word  
 to qualify it, much better than “time;” for when so placed it  
 usually expresses “a period or crisis in man’s life over which he  
 has no control.” See Num. xviii. 23, נַעַם, “At the appointed

## SECTIO DUODECIMA.

Præterea hoc exemplum sapientiæ sub sole vidi, 13  
quod plurimum apud me valuit. Erat urbs parva, 14  
et pauci in eâ homines; rex autem magnus ad eam  
accessit, cinxitque, et adversus eam ingentes turres  
exstruxit. Inventus vero in eo est vir pauper, idem- 15

time,” and so עֲתִים in Ps. xxxi. 16, “My ‘times’ or ‘destinies’ are in thy hand,” and in 1 Chron. xxix. 30, and Job xxiv. 1. Astrologers were called “those who understand the ‘times’ or ‘destinies.’” Whether the period or crisis expressed by עַת be one of prosperity or adversity is frequently determined only by the context. Instances of the first are Ps. lxxx. 16, and of the second Is. xiii. 22, and xxvii. 7. In the verse preceding the present as connected with פִּנֵּעַ it signifies “a crisis either of good or evil,” and may be rendered by the general phrase “destiny” or “doom,” and such must consequently be its meaning here, as it was also in iii. 17, where the nature of the crisis intended is equally undetermined by the context.

Observe the difference between מְצֹדָה, “a net,” used in this verse and מְצֹדִים in verse 14, which is the plural of מְצֹד, and means “great towers,” מְגֹדִים.

Ver. 13. “He here speaks of the effects and consequences “of wisdom in political affairs. He says the following instance “of the excellence and value of wisdom had had great weight

## THE TWELFTH SECTION.

13 גַּם-זֶה רָאִיתִי חֲכָמָה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְגִדּוּלָהּ הִיא  
 14 אֵלַי : עִיר קִטְנָה וְאֲנָשִׁים בָּהּ מְעַט וּבֶא-אֵלֶיהָ מֶלֶךְ  
 גָּדוֹל וְסָבֵב אֹתָהּ וּבָנָה עָלֶיהָ מִצּוּרִים גְּדוֹלִים :  
 15 וּמִצָּא בָּהּ אִישׁ מְסֻפֵּן חָלָם וּמִלֹּט-הוּא אֶת-הָעִיר

“and influence with him, i. e. in leading him to make it a rule  
 “to appoint wise men to head military expeditions, and not rich  
 “and powerful fools.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. *זֶה חֲכָמָה* is “this piece of wisdom, or “this case  
 of wisdom and its efficacy.”

Ver. 14. “He pictures to us a small city, with but few  
 “inhabitants, and over against it and round about it a powerful  
 “king besieging it with a large force, the city being situated  
 “in a low place, so that he could build towers ‘over it,’ i. e.  
 “higher than it, and it seems doomed to be taken.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn appears to take *עָלֶיהָ* to mean “over”  
 or “above” it. It may mean merely “against.”

Ver. 15. “This indigent man had never been mentioned  
 “by the people of the town before he delivered it by his wis-  
 “dom.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word *זָכַר* means either “thought of so as to  
 recollect,” or “made mention of.” Perhaps the English word  
 “notice,” expresses it very well in this place.

The noun substantive agreeing with *מִצָּא* is either *הַמֶּלֶךְ*,  
 the last person mentioned, or *הַמּוֹצֵא* understood. “Invent

בְּחִכְמָתוֹ וְאָדָם לֹא זָכַר אֶת-הָאִישׁ הַמְסִכֵּן הַהוּא :

16 וְאָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי טוֹבָה חֲכָמָה מִגְּבוּרָה וְחִכְמַת הַמְסִכֵּן

17 בְּזוּיָהּ וְדִבְרָיו אֵינָם נִשְׁמָעִים : דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּנִחַת

18 נִשְׁמָעִים מִזְעָקָת מוֹשֵׁל בַּבְּסִילִים : טוֹבָה חֲכָמָה

CHAP.  
X.

1 מִמְּלֵי קָרָב וְחוּטָא אַחֵר יֵאָפֵד טוֹבָה הַרְבֵּה : זְבוּיָהּ

inveniens," i. e. "inventus est." See Gen. xvi. 14, where "vocatus est puteus" is expressed by the words קָרָא לְבֵאֵר, scilicet הַקָּרָא, &c. See also Is. ix. 5, Gen. xi. 9, xlvi. 1.

NOTE. Ver. 16. The whole of this and the following verses are the reflections of Solomon on the occurrence he has just been describing.

Ver. 17. "Are not the counsels of wise men heard to "the tranquillizing and refreshing of the mind more than the "clamorous harangue of the overbearing ruler among fools? "And why will not men listen to them?" Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn renders this verse, "the counsels of the wise are heard more for peace and quietness, &c." i. e. "have, when heard, a greater tendency to promote peace than the clamour, &c." However, it is more rigorously in accordance with the accents to take דִּבְרֵים בְּנִחַת נִשְׁמָעִים as opposed to זְעָקָה, and to understand טוֹבִים מִן, supplying it from the טוֹבָה in the last verse. "A wise man speaks calmly, without clamorous noise or violent gesticulation, and his counsel spoken and 'heard' quietly is better than that of the popular demagogue, who sways at his pleasure the minds of the foolish, and is vehement and noisy in his harangues." Such is probably the true meaning of מוֹשֵׁל בַּבְּסִילִים. It has been variously in-



que sapiens qui sapientiâ suâ oppidum servavit; nec quisquam pauperem illum animadverterat (*vel* me-  
 16 morârat). Dicebam igitur, “Sapientia præstat for-  
 titudini quamquam sapientia pauperis contemnatur,  
 17 nec audiantur ejus consilia. Consilia sapientum tran-  
 quillè audita præstant clamori imperantis inter stul-  
 18 tos.” Præstat sapientia instrumentis bellicis; sed  
 CAP. X. unus error multum bonum irritum reddet, (*vel* vi-  
 1 tiabit). Muscæ mortuæ singulæ quæque efficiunt

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terpreted. Some take it to mean “the foolish ruler,” ac-  
 cording to the construction יְהוָה בְּעֵזְרִי, “the Lord is among  
 my helpers,” i. e. “the Lord is my helper,” and יְהוָה בְּסִמְכִי  
 נִפְשִׁי. Others render it “the prince of fools,” “stultissimus  
 stultorum.” Others translate the verse, “The words of wise men  
 are heard in quietness, i. e. by the sedate (and are attended to),  
 more than the clamorous harangue of a leader is by fools.”

Ver. 18. “‘It is true that this wisdom is better to defend  
 “and deliver than weapons of war; but sometimes when there  
 “exists one defect in a wise man or one good quality is lacking  
 “in him, much good is consequently spoilt.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. חֵטָא is generally a participle, and means “a  
 sinner;” but here the Rabbinical Commentators are inclined to  
 take it to be a noun abstract, signifying “defect,” and of the  
 form יוֹתֵר (which is also a noun abstract, and signifies “ex-  
 cess” or “superiority”). This version agrees better with what  
 follows, where it is shewn by a metaphor that what is most ex-  
 cellent may be spoilt by a very slight admixture of what is bad.  
 I render יֵאָבֵד “may spoil.”

Ver. 1. “He says, ‘As dead flies, even each singly and  
 “separately, cause the ointment of the apothecary to stink and

ut foetide effervescat unguentum pigmentarii; *ita* pretiosum sapientiâ et honore virum parva stultitia *corrumpit*. Cor sapientis est ei ad dextram, cor 2

“to effervesce, so even a little folly causes to be in bad odour a man who is highly valuable and respectable on account of his wisdom and honours, and spoils his good name.” He had already drawn a comparison between good fame and good ointment in a former chapter.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. When a plural noun is used as here with a verb singular, the verb is predicated of each of the individuals of the subject separately, and we should insert before it “each one,” or “each of them.” Instances of this are, Exod. xxxi. 14, where it is said of the Sabbath, מְחַלְלֶיהָ מוֹת יוֹמָת, “Each one who pollutes it shall surely be slain,” and Prov. iii. 18, וְתִמְכִּיָּה (דִּהְכֶמְהָ) מְאֻשֶּׁר, “Blessed is each one who holds her fast.” He means here to illustrate by a metaphor the mischief of a single error or defect in a wise counsellor by stating that a single dead fly may cause a pot of ointment to turn putrid, or at any rate that if a number of them cause this to happen each contributes to the result.

יִבֶּעַ is the Hiphil of נָבַע, which here bears a sense cognate to that of בּוּעָה, “tumor,” “pustula,” in the Talmudic language, and אֲבַעְבָּעוֹת, “blains,” in the Biblical. The two words together may be rendered, “foetide effervescere facit;” for when two verbs are thus placed in juxta-position without an adverb or conjunction between them, the first is used adverbially. See Ps. xlv. 5, צֵלָה רָכַב, “Ride prosperously;” Ps. xlvi. 4, יִהְיֶמוּ יַחְמְרוּ מִיָּמִיו, “Its waters may rage boisterously;” Hosea ix. 9, הִעֲמִיקוּ שַׁחְתּוֹ, “They have deeply corrupted;” Ps. cvi. 13, מִחֲרֵי שָׁכְחוּ מַעֲשָׂיו, “They quickly forgot his works;” and Ps. lxxi. 20. And Jeremiah says, “Humble yourselves, sit

מִוֹת יִבְאִישׁ יִבִּיעַ שָׁמֶן רוֹקֶה יָקָר מַחְכְּמָה מִבְּבוֹר  
סְכָלוֹת מַעֵט: לֵב חָכָם לִימִינוֹ וְלֵב כְּסִיל לְשִׁמְאָלוֹ: 2

down," for "sit down humbly." Or perhaps the word יִבִּיעַ is used in the sense of "causing to hiss," for a putrid thing frequently bubbles up and produces a hissing sound. In this sense of "utterance of sound" we find נִבֵּעַ in the Proverbs i. 23, רוֹחִי אֲבִיעָה לָכֶם, "eructabo (*vel* proferam, effundam) vobis spiritum meum."

יָקָר with a kametz under the first letter is an adjective; but if there is a sheva there it means "honour," "glory." מַחְכְּמָה מִבְּבוֹר is an asyndeton. So in Ps. xxxii. 9, we have כְּסוּסִים כְּפָרָר, "Like the horse *and* like the mule;" Ps. lii. 6, "Thou lovest all words of devouring *and* the tongue of lying;" Is. lxiii. 11, מֹשֶׁה עַמּוֹ, "Moses *and* his people;" and Habb. iii. 11, שֶׁמֶשׁ יָרַח עָמַר, "The sun *and* the moon stood still;" in all which places the conjunction copulative must be supplied. Here we have שְׁכָלוֹת, which in i. 17, was spelt with a ס, סְכָלוֹת.

Ver. 2. "Because the right is the hand which is always "most in readiness to do anything, he says a wise man's mind "is at his right hand, in order to express that it is always "ready for an occasion on which he may wish to employ it; "and he means that the sagacity of a wise man who foresees "consequences is recognizable in all his actions, and is constantly of service to him, as if it dwelt always in his right "hand, which is man's chief instrument of action; and that the "fool's mind is as though it were in his left hand, because he "is sluggish and backward in the performance of any good "work." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. This verse and that which follows it are evidently intended to express that seeing what great mischief may arise

- 3 וְגַם-בְּדַרְךְ בְּשֹׁהֶסֶבֶל הַלֵּךְ לְבֹו חָסֵר וְאָמַר לֵכָל  
 4 סָבֵל הוּא : אִם-רוּחַ הַמּוֹשֵׁל תַּעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ מְקוֹמָהּ  
 5 אֶל-תַּנַּח כִּי מִרְפָּא יִנִּיחַ חֲטָאִים גְּדוֹלִים : יֵשׁ רָעָה  
 רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּשִׁגְגָה שִׁיצָא מִלִּפְנֵי הַשֵּׁלִיט :  
 6 נָתַן הַפֶּלֶל בַּמְרוֹמִים רַבִּים וַעֲשִׂירִים בַּשָּׁפֶל יֵשְׁבוּ :

from one error on the part of a counsellor, the wise man will be constantly cautious and wary against committing mistakes.

The word נולד, which Mendlessohn uses here, and which I have rendered "consequences," means literally that which is "produced" in the womb of time.

Ver. 3. "In all his business and occupation he shews that "his mind and knowledge fail him, and if he even be merely "walking by the way, he proclaims against himself and lets "every one know that he is a fool." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The Keri on בְּשֹׁהֶסֶבֶל is "יתיר ה"; "the ה is redundant."

The preterite seems to be used here as an aorist or frequentative tense.

חָסֵר may be either a verbal adjective or the verb itself, which is thus pointed in the preterite. Whichever it be, its sense is here intransitive. "His mind is deficient," or "his mind fails." In this sense we find it in the future in Deut. xv. 8. It is generally used as a transitive verb with an accusative, and therefore with אֶת.

Ver. 4. "If the wrath of the prince rise against thee, be "not in haste to leave thy place and fly out of his presence; "but rather keep thy post of office and do not exchange it for "another, for a submissive neck and a soft tongue will dismiss

3 stulti ad sinistram ejus. Etiam in viâ cum stultus  
 ambulat excors est, et se stultum esse fatetur om-  
 4 nibus. Si ira principis contra te orta erit, locum  
 tuum ne deseras; magna enim delicta dimittet,  
 5 (i. e. expiabit) obsequium. Est malum quod sub  
 sole vidi quasi hallucinationem apud principem exo-  
 6 rientem. Evecta est stultitia ad excelsa loca multa,  
 7 dum manent nobiles in humili loco. Vidi servos equis

“and atone for great offences, and thou wilt thereby at length  
 “cause his displeasure to subside. מִרְפָּא is from the root רָפָא,  
 “and signifies submission and patience of temper. Mendlessohn.

NOTE. I have already had occasion to notice the words  
 תָּנַח and יָנַח, derivatives of a verb never found but in the  
 Hiphil, which the Lexicographers unaccountably derive from  
 יָנַח, whereas they would be more regularly derived from נָנַח.  
 This verb is used in the sense “to let go,” “to dismiss.”

Ver. 5. “He says, ‘Sometimes, it is true, the public ad-  
 “ministration will be bad, because the ruler may do things  
 “contrary to truth and justice, (which seem like an oversight  
 “or mistake proceeding from him), without knowing how they  
 “will end.”” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon speaks here of the errors of kings in the  
 most extenuating terms, as if unwilling to allow that they can  
 be guilty of anything worse than a mistake.

The regular form for יֹצֵא would be יֹצֵאָה; but to prevent  
 too much stress being laid on the א the ה drops out, and the  
 vowel falls back to the ז so as still to distinguish the word as  
 the feminine participle from יֹצֵא, the א becoming נֶכֶתֶר  
 instead of the ה.

Ver. 6, 7. “Sometimes a king gives ear to the voice of  
 “youths and detractors, and raises folly higher and higher in



invectos, principes autem humi servorum ritu ambulantes. Qui fodit foveam in eam cadet, et qui 8  
 maceriem perrumpit mordebit eum anguis. Qui lapi- 9  
 des amovet lædetur illis; qui ligna findit iis periclitabitur, si hebetatum fuerit ferrum, neque ipse 10  
 aciem *ejus* exacuerit, at majores vires intendere

“rank, while great men are degraded and occupy a subordinate  
 “place by his order. And sometimes these upstarts are allowed  
 “by the reigning monarch to ride on horses, which was not  
 “permitted in ancient times to any but men of rank and noble  
 “birth; while princes become poor men, and are forced to come  
 “down from their greatness and walk like slaves on the  
 “ground.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 6. He shews however in what follows the imprudence of slanderously aspersing persons in high office however ill chosen, and that he who tries to overthrow a corrupt administration may be so rash and uncompromising in the attempt, that all recovery and retracing his steps would be impracticable or useless.

נָתַן, “positus est,” “constitutus est,” as in Esth. vi. 8, and Dan. ii. 2.

סָכַל and נִשְׁפָּל are both abstract nouns, and mean respectively “folly” and “humiliation.”

Ver. 8. “He who digs a pit for others may fall into it; “and he who pulls down a stone wall, a serpent such as lives “in the cavities of walls may bite him.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The Chetib here has the anomaly of a dageshed letter after a shurek (מֶלֶאֱפוֹם) in the word גִּמְצָן; and the Keri accordingly substitutes a kibbutz (ֹ) for the shurek. The Targum explains it by the Chaldee קְמוּצָה, “a great pit,” a word evidently cognate with גִּמְצָן, because ג and ק are both palatals.

רָאִיתִי עֲבָדִים עַל-סוּסִים וְשָׂרִים הֹלְכִים בְּעֲבָדִים  
 עַל-הָאָרֶץ : הָפַר גּוֹמָיִן בּוֹ יִפֹּל וּפְרִיץ גָּדָר יִשְׁכַּנּוּ 8  
 נָחַשׁ : מִפֵּיַע אֲבָנִים יַעֲצֹב בָּהֶם בּוֹקֵעַ עֲצִים יִסְכֵּן 9  
 בָּם : אִם-קָהָה הַבְּרוֹל וְהוּא לֹא-פָנִים קִלְקֹל 10

The digging a pit and demolishing a fence here spoken of are highly figurative expressions for the undermining of an administration, which may be attended with great danger. Similar metaphors occur in the next two verses.

Ver. 9, 10. "He who removes stones from their quarries "or elsewhere may stumble over them and cause himself pain, "and he who cleaves wood may be endangered thereby if he "have neglected to sharpen the axe and has to use greater "force, i. e. a workman will fare well or ill according to his "skill in his trade, and if he be awkward and careless in it "he will always suffer for it, but the skilful workman does his "work with less trouble, and attains his object quickly with "less risk." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon is here very ænigmatic and poetic in his language. He introduces fresh metaphors to express the danger of attempts to overthrow, by slanderous aspersion, the authority of those in high station, and implies that in political affairs discretion is the best safeguard; that he who is rash and uncompromising in his reflections on those in office always endangers himself and may fail in attaining his object of removing those unworthy of power, but that whoever waits patiently and quits not his post will find obstacles gradually remove themselves from before him; and his prudence will attain superior success in political affairs, just as the skill of the careful artificer does in works of art.

# 11 וַחֲלִים יִגְבֵּר וַיִּתְּרוֹן הַכָּשִׁיר חֲכָמָה : אִם-יִשָּׁךְ

The futures in these two verses should be rendered into English by means of the auxiliary verb "may."

Ver. 9. In removing large stones the awkward workman may either stumble over them or make them fall upon himself.

The word יִסָּכֵן is either "may be cut," or "may be endangered." For the former sense of it we have Biblical authority, (inasmuch as the cognate word שָׁכִין is used for a "knife," or some sharp instrument in Prov. xxiii. 2, where Solomon says that a man might as well put a knife to his throat (שָׁכִין בְּלֶעָד) as forget to demean himself aright in the presence of royalty); but for the latter only Talmudie, as where we have סָכֵן בְּיַד שׁוֹטָה סָכָנָה, "culter in manu stulti periculum est."

These two verses (9 and 10) must be taken together, for there is no break in the sense between them. "He who cleaves logs of wood may be endangered by them, if the iron be blunt and he have to increase his force."

Ver. 10. קָהָה is the Pihel of קָהָה, "to be blunt." Buxtorf, desirous to reserve its transitive sense to this conjugation, renders it, "he has blunted;" but then where is the אֶת before הַבְּרָזָל, and to what purpose would have been the word הוּא which follows? There can be no doubt that the Kal and Pihel of קָהָה bear the same intransitive sense, as is also the case with those of כָּהָה, "to be faint."

קָלַקְל פָּנִים is literally, "has made smooth (polished) its surfaces," which is equivalent to "sharpening its edge;" because that is the method of whetting an edged tool.

הַכָּשִׁיר is a substantive from the Hiphil of כָּשַׁר, and means success in work, (observe that there is no dagesh in כ). כָּשַׁר

coactus fuerit; successûs autem præstantia sapientiæ  
 11 attinet. Si momorderit anguis, incantationi imme-  
 dicabilis *morsus* erit; itaque garrulo nulla est *suc-*

almost always denotes success in this book, as at ch. xi. 6,  
 “Whether this or that shall prosper, יִכָּשֶׁר.”

The phrase יִתְרוֹן הַכְּשִׁיר הַכְּמָה has a double meaning here. As referring to the artificer it means that “superiority of success is skill,” i. e. belongs to skill and is a consequence of it, because the skilful workman will not work with blunt tools and so run the risk of wounding himself; and as referring to the politician it means that the prudent man will succeed in attaining his political objects, because he will not adopt dangerous and obnoxious means in prosecuting them.

Ver. 11. “He says that if a serpent bite him who breaks  
 “down a wall, then it (the bite) will be without enchantment;  
 “there will be no cure for his wound; and then you will see  
 “that the slanderer has no advantage or the man who says,  
 “‘My lips are my own, who is lord over me?’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. בְּלֹא is “without,” as in Numb. xxxv. 23, בְּלֹא  
 רְאוּת, “without seeing.” לִחַשׁ, “a thing muttered,” “a spell.”  
 It becomes לִחַשׁ at the pause. We must understand before  
 בְּלֹא a word signifying “the bite,” supplying it from יִשֶּׁד.

Probably יִתְרוֹן הַכְּשִׁיר in the preceding verse, viz. “superiority of success.” The garrulous slanderer cannot reckon with certainty on success like the prudent man; he has no advantage over other men in that respect. The Talmudic Rabbins, according to their usual practice, took this verse as an isolated maxim, and interpreted it, “If the serpent bite, its bite is incurable by a spell; and a babbler is no better (i. e. than the serpent).” This appears from the following passage. Bab. Talm. Erchin, Sect. iii. : אִם יִשֹּׁד הַנֶּחָשׁ בְּלֹא לִחַשׁ :

*cessus* præstantia. Verba oris sapientis sunt, “Cle- 12  
mentiam *adhibe*,” labiorum autem stulti, “Interi-  
mas illum.” Initium verborum oris ejus est stultitia, 13  
et vocis ejus finis exitialis insania. Verbis quoque 14  
abundat stultus; nescit tamen homo quid sit fu-  
turum, et quid post illum sit quis illum certiore

לעתיד לבא מתקבצות ובאות כל החיות אצל הנחש ואומרות לו,  
ארי דורס ואוכל, זאב טורף ואוכל, אתה מה הנאה יש לך:  
יִתְרוֹן לְבַעַל־הַלְשׁוֹן, i. e. “In the day of judgment  
all the beasts will assemble and come to the serpent, and say  
to him, ‘The lion tramples *on his prey* and eats it up; the  
wolf rends *his prey* but also devours it; but thou, what plea-  
sure hast thou *in biting*?’ Then *the serpent* will say to them,  
‘The babbler is no better.’”

Ver. 12. “The wise man is not like the garrulous slan-  
derer; nearly all the words that proceed from his mouth are  
“petitions for favour and clemency for every one, even for his  
“enemies and persecutors; not so those which proceed from the  
“lips of a fool; for he always says, ‘Destroy him,’ and there  
“is no clemency or kindness in his heart.

“The word תִּבְלֶעְנִי is the second person masculine and  
“not the third feminine, and it is the expression made use of  
“by the fool, i. e. the slanderer.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The emphasis here is upon חָכָם and בָּסִיל. He  
says it is the part of the wise man to plead for favour to  
others, and of the fool to seek their ruin. This is all in con-  
tinuation of the above remarks. We see here the perplexity  
which may sometimes arise from the abruptness of the Hebrew  
language together with its want of inverted commas to mark  
quotations. This is peculiarly apparent in the account of the  
judgment of Solomon, from which at first sight it would appear



12 הִנֵּהשׁ בְּלוֹא-לֶחֶשׁ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן לְבַעַל הַלְשׁוֹן : דְּבָרַי  
 13 פִּי-חֶקֶם הֵן וְשִׁפְתוֹת בְּסִיל תִּבְלָעֵנּוּ : תִּחְלֶת דְּבָרַי-  
 14 פִּיהוּ סִבְלֹת וְאַחֲרִית פִּיהוּ הוֹלְלֹת רָעָה : וְהַפְּכָל  
 יִרְבֶּה דְּבָרִים לֹא-יֵדַע הָאָדָם מֶה-שִׁיחֶיהָ וְאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה

that he adjudged the child to the woman who wished it to be divided, because she had spoken last in the narration and the king says, "Give her the living child and in no wise slay it; she is the mother of it." But he is in fact repeating the words of the other woman from recollection or minutes of proceedings and then pronounces at once, "She (the woman who used those words) is the mother of it." That he is quoting her words, appears further from the unusual Hebrew word יָלֹד for "child," which she uses and which the king repeats. This ingenious explication is due to Mr Bernard. It is probable that the word יָלֹד is a vulgarism which such a woman would use.

Ver. 13. "But if the beginning and primary effect of the words he utters be folly tending to injure others, the end and final consequence of them is sad infatuation tending to his own hurt; for he shall not go unpunished." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. הוֹלְלֹת here is a feminine singular, similar in form to סִבְלֹת. It cannot but be suspected however that by some error ו has been written for י which is found in place of it in the early chapters of this book, but then רָעָה would not agree with it as it now does.

Ver. 14. "He talks much and yet knows not what will be on the morrow, and though it be already close behind him, he does not perceive it and there is none to tell him of it." Mendlessohn.

15 מֵאַחֲרָיו מִי יָגִיד לוֹ : עֲמַל הַכְּסִילִים תִּגְעַעְנוּ אִישׁ  
לְאַחֲרָע לָלֶכֶת אֶל-עִיר :

NOTE. He had said in the preceding verse that when the fool utters his thoughtless slanders he little thinks that he will eventually prove to have been acting the part of a madman and endangering himself, if not involving himself in certain ruin, "that the consequence of his speeches is that of fatal madness;" and he now goes on to say that the fool makes free with his tongue, though no one knows what may be the consequence of his slanders to him, and there is none who can warn him as to what will be his fate. Mendlessohn appears to make הָאָדָם mean "the man," i. e. the man who was last mentioned, "the fool." This however is inadmissible, as in that case we should have had הָאִישׁ, or הוּא. הָאָדָם invariably means either "men in general," "mankind," or "any man," "any body," as appears from many passages of this book; see viii. 17, "Inasmuch as man (הָאָדָם) labours to find it out and cannot," and especially the beginning of the same verse, where there is no previous mention of any man to whom הָאָדָם can refer, "So I contemplated the whole work of God, for man cannot find out the part of it, &c." As an instance of the second use, see vi. 12, "For who knows what is good for a man (לְאָדָם for לְהָאָדָם) in life? since who can tell him what may be awaiting him?" So here the sense must be, "no man knows what may be about to happen in consequence of the fool's garrulity." The Hebrews constantly use the definite where we should use the indefinite article; see Note to ver. 18, and הַכְּסִילִים in ver. 15.

The last six words of this verse are nearly the same as those at the end of chapter vi. In both places, "that which is behind him" seems to mean "a calamity ready to fall upon him."

15 faciet? Stultorum labor unumquemque *eorum* defatigabit, quia est *quasi* nescius ad urbem pervenire.

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Ver. 15. "He compares a fool who likes to meddle in "things too great and wonderful for him while he is ignorant "of those things which every body sees and knows, to a man "who wants to reach a city, and does not know the way, and "so wearies himself without attaining his wish." Mendlesohn.

NOTE. The Rabbinic commentators notice that the word עָמַל is masculine and therefore cannot agree with the verb. Either therefore some word qualifying עָמַל must have dropt out, or it may be a solitary instance of that word being feminine, as Aben Ezra observes is the case with כָּבוֹד, which he says is always masculine except in the passage in the end of Genesis, "With their assembly mine honour shall not be united," אֶל-תֵּחָד כְּבוֹדִי. Here however תֵּחָד may be the second person masculine, as well as the third feminine; (which cannot be the case with תֵּינַעְנְעוּ); and the rendering will then be, "With their assembly be not thou united, my honour."

Ver. 15 cannot be construed, "The labour of fools (i. e. profitless toil) will weary out him who does not know his way to a city he wants to reach," because the antecedent of a pronominal affix in Hebrew always precedes the verb which has the affix, beside that the verse would then convey a mere truism. The first clause must mean either "The labour of fools will weary out each of them (i. e. of the fools)," or "Profitless labour will weary him (i. e. the slanderer spoken of above);" and the second clause either, "*like* one who knew not his way to a city *when he wanted to reach it*," (if אֲשֶׁר mean "who"); or "since *he is as if* he knew not his way, &c." (if אֲשֶׁר mean "since"). We had יָדַע followed by an infinitive with the prefix ל at Eccles. iv. 13. The phrase לֹא-יָדַע לִלְכֹּת is like the Latin "nescit ire."

## SECTIO DECIMA TERTIA.

Væ tibi, terra, quod rex tuus puerilis sit, et 16  
principes tui mane comedant. Prosperitas est tua, 17  
terra, quod rex tuus nobilis sit, et principes tui  
justo tempore epulentur ad se roborandum et non

Ver. 16. "Woe to thee when thy king is childish and  
"neglects to administer the affairs of the kingdom, and thy  
"princes feast in the morning, before they have transacted  
"the public business, contrary to the injunction of Scripture,  
" 'Administer justice in the morning.' " Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The literal rendering would be, "Woe to thee, O  
land, in case that thy king should be childish," i. e. it would be  
a woe, a great misfortune for thee that this should happen;  
and so with regard to the  $\text{שִׁי}$  in the next verse, "It would  
be thy happiness, &c."

Ver. 17. " 'When thy king is a son of nobles,' means,  
" 'when he acts the part of great princes.'  $\text{בְּן־חֹרִים}$  as ap-  
"plied to a prince is the opposite of  $\text{בְּן־בְּלִיעַל}$ , 'And thy  
"princes eat in due season,' (i. e. after they have finished their  
"day's work of administering justice in the country), and only  
"for necessity, in order that their own vigour and strength  
"may contribute to the general good, not for the sake of  
"luxurious indulgence in wine and dainties." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The singular of the word  $\text{אֲשָׁרִים}$ , viz.  $\text{אֲשָׁר}$ , is  
very rarely placed, as the plural is, in construction with another  
substantive, or with a pronominal affix united to it. Of the  
latter case there is a single instance in Scripture, Prov. xxix. 18,

## THE THIRTEENTH SECTION.

אֵי-לָךְ אֶרֶץ שְׂמִלְכָךְ נָעַר וְשָׂרִיךְ בְּבִקֶּר יֹאכְלוּ : 16  
 אֲשָׁרִיךְ אֶרֶץ שְׂמִלְכָךְ בְּנִי-חֹרִים וְשָׂרִיךְ בָּעַת יֹאכְלוּ 17

אֲשָׁרִי, which is the singular with the pronominal affix of the third person singular attached to it. In the same way עַל and תָּחַת when joined with pronominal affixes and אַחֲרֵי in all its combinations take a plural form. It is true that the construct form of the plural is אֲשָׁרִי, but when אֲשָׁרִים is coupled with affixes the two first vowels would continue unaltered if this word followed the regular form, and we should have here אֲשָׁרִיךְ, so that but for the י which marks the word אֲשָׁרִיךְ to be really formed from the plural, we might have taken it to be derived from the singular; this however would have given אֲשָׁרִי like אֲשָׁרִי. Similarly we find Ps. cxxviii. 2, אֲשָׁרִיךְ; Prov. xxix. 18, אֲשָׁרִי; Is. xxxii. 20, אֲשָׁרִיכֶם; which are all formed from the plural of אֲשָׁר.

The literal rendering of the first words of this verse is, "Blessings are thine, O land, provided that thy king be, &c."

בְּנִי-חֹרִים is clearly opposed to נָעַר in the preceding verse, the latter denoting unworthiness, the former worthiness of high station. The Rabbinic commentators say that "חֹרִים either is equivalent to בְּעָלֵי חֵירוֹת, i.e. (in the Talmudic language) 'those possessed of freedom,' 'freemen,' or means 'fine white linen,' and hence 'those who wear white linen,' as great princes are called



18 בְּגִבּוֹרָה וְלֹא בִשְׂתִי : בְּעֲצָלָתִים יִמָּךְ הַמְקָרָה

19 וּבִשְׁפָלוּת יָדָיִם יִדְלָף הַבַּיִת : לְשֹׁחוֹק עֲשִׂים לָהֶם

in Arabic בלובן.” The derivation of the word חור however is in all probability the Arabic <sup>حر</sup> “liber,” “ingenuous,” and neither of those mentioned by the Rabbinites. It is always used in the plural; as in 1 Kings xxi. 8, 11, Is. xxxiv. 12, and בְּרוֹחוֹרִים is equivalent to חור, just as we have in Joel iv. 6, בְּנֵי הַיִּנּוּסִים, “filii Græcorum,” for יִנּוּסִים, like *υῖες Ἀχαιων*.

בְּ is used in בִּשְׂתִי and בְּגִבּוֹרָה in the sense “propter.” We find it in a similar sense at Ps. vii. 7, “because of” or “on account of the fury of my adversaries;” and Jon. i. 14, “Let us not perish בְּנִפְשׁ הָאִישׁ i. e. for the life of this man.”

Ver. 18. “When a man is indolent, and neglects to repair “a small breach in the roof of a house, the beams will at last “fall down; and if the master of a house hang down his “hands or fold them on his bosom, the rain will at last pour “through into the midst of his house. He speaks here metaphorically of a king and his princes, and means to say that “if they employ themselves only in eating and drinking luxuriously, and sluggishly neglect the affairs of the state, the “kingdom will presently come to nought, like a house which “gradually falls into ruins in consequence of the indolence of “its owner.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Aben Ezra says that עֲצָלָתִים is in the dual number because it refers to the two hands; so that בְּעֲצָלָתִים would mean “when both the hands are sluggish.” The singular number is עֲצָלָה, “indolence,” which occurs in the Proverbs. יִמָּךְ is the apocopated future Niphal of מָכָה. It means, “will sink down

18 ad compòtandum. Per pigritiam collabetur contig-  
natio, et per manuum dimissionem perpluet domus,  
19 in irrisionem illorum qui parant cibos, vinumque  
quod vivos (*vel* vitam) hilarat, et pecuniam quæ

of itself." We have here in the word הַבִּיַּית an instance of what is very common in Hebrew, the use of the definite article where in English we should use the indefinite. See Note to ver. 14.

NOTE. Ver. 19. Mendlessohn here makes עוֹשִׂים agree with שָׂרִים in the last verse but two, and, considering those two to be in a parenthesis, renders this verse, "Who make "great entertainments, not to strengthen the body, but for "laughter and rejoicing; (לָהֶם meaning a 'banquet,' as well "as 'bread;' vide Dan. v. 1) and their wine cheers the people "who carouse with them; and so it is clear that money will "answer every purpose with them;" "and accordingly," says Mendlessohn, "they constantly cry out as it were 'Give, give,' and drain the resources of the country."

But though all the commentators agree with Mendlessohn, (except indeed Yarchi and Aben Ezra who propose a somewhat far-fetched and improbable interpretation, for which see Rosenmuller at this verse); it must be allowed that to suppose a parenthesis of the two last verses, 17 and 18, which are the antithesis to the preceding one, is a very unsatisfactory method of explanation, because, the word שָׂרִים occurring in verse 17, as well as in 16, if עוֹשִׂים agree with this word at all it must necessarily refer to it where it last occurs, and therefore not as used in verse 16, so that there can be a parenthesis only of the last verse (18). If this however be the case, verses 19 and 17 form together a sentence whose clauses are directly contradictory to each other, and which therefore is absolute nonsense. I therefore venture to propose, what I believe is an

omnia suppeditat. Ne in cogitatione quidem tuâ regi 20  
maledicas, neque in penetralibus quidem cubiculi  
tui nobili viro obloquaris, namque avis cœli deve-  
het vocem, et rem nuntiabit aligera.

entirely new suggestion, to render this verse as a continuation of the preceding one, thus, "Through remissness of the hands a house drops through, to the derision of those who acquire *by industry* bread, and wine that cheers people, and money that furnishes every thing." My arguments for it are these. עֲשָׂה is often used in the sense "to acquire," vide Gen. xxxi. 1, xii. 5, Deut. viii. 17, 18. שְׂחֹק retains the same form when in a state of construction; and it always means "derision," or "a laughing-stock," as in Lament. iii. 14, הָיִיתִי שְׂחֹק, "I became a laughing-stock," "ludibrium fiebam." The omission of אֲשֶׁר as it is here omitted before the verbs יִשְׂמַח and יַעֲנֶה, is a construction not at all uncommon, see Ps. lxxvii. 6, "In order that a subsequent generation, children *that* should be born, (בְּנֵים יוֹלְדִים), might know these things; that they might arise and tell them to their children;" Gen. xv. 13, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, "In a land *which* belongs not to them;" Ps. lxxxiv. 6, and Ps. lxxi. 18, "Till I have declared thy goodness to every one *that* is to come," לְכָל-יָבוֹא; and a still more remarkable parallel passage in Ps. civ. 14, 15, of a part of which the present passage seems almost a quotation, לְהוֹצִיא לָהֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לִבֵּב-אֲנוּשׁ וכו', "To bring food out of the ground, and wine *that* cheers the heart of man." הַיִּים may be either "life," or "the living," "people." Of course on the above rendering הַכֶּסֶף must be in the accusative case; אֵת is generally prefixed to this case when it is in "a definite" state, but is also not unfrequently omitted,

וַיֵּן יִשְׁמַח חַיִּים וְהִפְסֵף יַעֲנֶה אֶת־הַכֹּל : גַּם בְּמִדְעָךְ 20  
 מֶלֶךְ אֶל־תִּקְלָל וּבַחֲרֵי מִשְׁבָּבְךָ אֶל־תִּקְלָל עֲשִׂיר  
 בִּי עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יוֹלִיךְ אֶת־הַקּוֹל וּבַעַל הַנְּנֻפִים יַגִּיד  
 דָּבָר :

(vide Hurwitz). Perhaps it is omitted here for euphony on account of the אֶת־הִי which follows almost immediately and because the construction made it so obvious that this must be in the accusative, as well as לָהֶם and יֵן.

I have already discussed the meaning of the word יַעֲנֶה at chap. v. 19, on the supposition that it is in the Kal in the present verse, when it will mean “grants,” or “supplies.” If we take it to be in the Hiphil, (as it may be), it must mean, “gives the means of procuring.” הַכֹּל may be either “every thing,” or “both,” i. e. “both bread and wine.”

Observe that שִׂחוֹק may be the infinitive, and we then construe, “So as for those to deride who acquire bread, &c.” and the sense is the same.

The rendering which I have adopted exhibits in this passage that repetition of an antithesis which several times occurs in this book and is particularly remarkable in the two last chapters of it; for Solomon in the two first verses of this Section contrasts the state of a country under a slothful and an active administration, and in the two verses which follow, as I have translated them, the ruin consequent on indolence in a family with the advantage resulting from diligence.

Ver. 20. “He addresses him who lives under the government of a ruler and says, ‘If thou perceivest that the king is childish, and the princes eat in the morning, restrain thyself from talking about it; and even in thy thoughts do not

## THE FOURTEENTH SECTION.

CHAP.  
XI.

שֶׁלָּה לַחֲמֹךְ עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם כִּי-בֶרֶךְ הַיָּמִים 1

“blame or reprobate the king’s conduct; nor speak lightly of his princes in the most secret place. Guard thy mouth and keep watch over thy tongue, and say not, I am in my chamber, who can hear me? for the bird of the sky’ (here he speaks mataphorically), ‘that sits in thy window and hears thy words, and the winged fowl may report it to the men of power, so that they may hate and destroy thee.’ He means, ‘Thou canst not be sufficiently on thy guard in this matter.’ This repetition seems to indicate that the passage is written in poetry.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. בְּחֻדְרֵי מְשַׁכְּבָה is literally “in the chambers of thy bed.” The Keri on הַבְּנָפִים is “יתיר ה’,” “ה’ is redundant.”

Ver. 1, 2. “According to the plain interpretation of this passage, he seems to be here addressing himself to merchants, and advising them to trade to a distance, even from one end of the world to the other; as if he would say, ‘Let them not be afraid to send their substance to those at a distance, or to transport it across the sea in trading vessels; for in the course of many days they will by this means gain much profit and advantage.’ He calls all mercantile occupation by the general phrase of ‘going down to the sea.’ For it was he who began the practice of sending ships to Ophir and Tarshish along with those of Hiram. And once every three years they brought



## SECTIO DECIMA QUARTA.

CAP.  
XI.

1 Mitte opes tuas super faciem aquarum; nam post multorum dierum intervallum recipies eas.

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“thence silver and gold and other kinds of merchandize, as is stated in Scripture. And it should seem that the king is seeking here to stir up and incite the minds of his servants and his people to do as he had done, in order that they might become rich and their wealth might be increased. In the second verse, according to its simple interpretation and its connexion with the preceding one, he seems to be advising a merchant not to invest all his property in one mercantile speculation, or to stow all his goods in one ship, but agreeably to prudence to divide it among seven or eight; and then if he lose by one he may make profit by another; for he cannot tell what accidents may happen in the world; and it is probable that he says ‘seven or eight’ in order to dissuade his hearers from paying attention to those diviners who select a certain number as likely to bring good luck, and reject another under the idea that it will be unlucky, and that he says this implying, ‘Commit portions of thy substance to seven or to eight vessels indifferently, and addict not thyself to divination by numbers.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The word שֶׁלַח has been incorrectly rendered in this passage “cast,” or “scatter,” and by the Latin translators “emitte,” “projice.” This verb, whether in Kal or Pihel, invariably means “to send,” except as applied to the discharge of missiles from a bow or an engine, where its use is clearly tech-

Septem vel octo *navibus* singulis partem impone; 2

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nical. The sense of “casting” or “scattering” is appropriated to the verb *שָׁלַךְ*, which is always used in the Hiphil, as we find it in iii. 5, “A time to keep, and a time to throw away,” *וְעֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ*. But if the passage be rendered as Lowth and nearly all the Rabbinic commentators have explained it, “Scatter thy seed-corn where there is no hope of a harvest;” i. e. “bestow thy benefits and bounty on those by whom thou canst not hope to be repaid,” the word *שָׁלַךְ* ought clearly to imply “scattering,” and that free and liberal distribution of charity which Christ recommends where he says, “When thou givest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; for they cannot recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Again, the motive here held out for sending out our bread, i. e. our livelihood or substance on the waters, is that we shall “find it again;” i. e. that same bread or substance, and recover it, as it implied, with profit upon it. Now it could not be intended that this should be our motive in liberality to the poor; for Christ says, “Call not thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee,” but it is at the resurrection that he tells us we are to look for the reward of it; and we cannot suppose that that reward is to consist in “bread,” or “substance.”

The second verse still more clearly indicates the correctness of Mendlessohn’s interpretation.

In the first place it is clear that through the whole of the context Solomon is merely giving precepts of worldly wisdom. For it has been shewn that such is the case in a number of verses preceding; and as to the following verses to the end of this Section, the only conclusion drawn from them by the author himself is, “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening

תִּמְצָאֵנוּ : תִּן-חֶלֶק לְשִׁבְעָה וְגַם לְשִׁמוֹנָה כִּי לֹא 2

lay not down thy hand, &c.” Accordingly it would be more consistent that in these two verses he should be merely recommending the disposal of our goods into more vessels than one, in order that we may not have our all staked in one<sup>1</sup> freight and so be as little as possible exposed to loss from accidents, than that he should have interrupted the general style and tenour of his discourse to advise us to lay up treasure for the life to come by liberality to the poor in this.

In the next place the exhortation conveyed in this verse to commit portions of our substance to seven or eight individuals is quite inconsistent with that to exercise a large and free liberality to the poor conveyed by Lowth’s rendering of the former verse. It is this species of liberality which is spoken of by Christ as to be recompensed at the resurrection, not the committal of our substance to a few individuals after the manner of the unjust steward who made himself friends with “the mammon of unrighteousness.” Besides, why should the number seven be fixed upon? It is perfectly inappropriate as employed in this place except inasmuch as it is a sacred number, which conveyed a certain charm or spell with its use, and might therefore be fixed upon by a superstitious merchant as the number of his ships, or even by a believer in spells as that of the friends to whom he would entrust his property, but on no ground whatever by a charitable person as the number of the poor recipients of his bounty. But the opinion that the entrusting of portions of our substance to several friends in order to increase its security is here recommended, is inadmissible even on Lowth’s rendering of the first verse, and may be set aside at once; and consequently the mention of these particular numbers goes entirely to support Mendlesohn’s interpretation, and no other.

3 תָּדַע מִה־יְהִיָּה רָעָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ : אִם־יִמְלְאוּ הָעַבִּים  
 גִּנְשָׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ יִרְיוּ וְאִם־יִפּוֹל עֵץ בַּדְּרוֹם וְאִם

Finally, the motive held out to compliance with the exhortation in this verse is, "For thou knowest not what evil may happen in the world." Now if it had been intended here to encourage us to exercise liberality to the poor, surely we should have been reminded of the recompense of a future state, to which there are so many allusions in this book, rather than of the uncertainty of abiding prosperity in this life, (which in itself would have been a motive to securing friends among the great and rich, and not among the poor); and yet this is all that those words can reasonably be supposed to mean; for there can be no doubt that if Solomon had intended by the second clause of verse (2) to say, "for thou knowest not what losses may befall thee in this world, *and therefore thou hadst best lay up treasure for another, i. e. by liberality to the poor,*" he would have said this expressly, and not merely have implied it. For the idea which it would then be left for the reader to supply would not suggest itself to us so readily as it does unless we were familiar with several passages of the New Testament, as for instance that in which Christ exhorts his disciples to make themselves friends in heaven by a due use of worldly wealth in order that when they should have to leave it they might be admitted to everlasting and heavenly habitations.

This is in fact a remarkable instance of the agreement of Jewish and Christian commentators in the attempt to extort the same far-fetched sense from a passage of Scripture, the method of דְּרָשׁ, or recondite interpretation on the one side, and that of fancifully devising parallelisms where they do not exist between the Old Testament and the New on the other, having led them both to the same conclusion.

3 nescis enim quid mali futurum sit in terris. Si plenæ fuerint nubes pluviam in terram effundent; ac si ceciderit lignum in austrum sive in septentrio-

חֶלֶק is put in the singular number distributively. The sense is, "Give a portion, a share, to each of seven or eight vessels."

Ver. 3, 4. "He proceeds to speak of those diviners, who "observe the clouds, and conjure up forms and shapes in them, "and by means of these think to ascertain and prognosticate "at the outset of their proceedings whether they will prosper "or not, or who notice from what quarter the wind blows, and "consult its advice as it were as to the direction in which they "shall sow, or the course they ought to adopt in their mer- "cantile or military operations so that they may prosper; as "though when the wind sets the clouds in motion it thereby gave "them in answer an intimation that they ought to direct their "operations towards the quarter whither it is going, and if "the clouds happen to be stationary and therefore the wind at "rest, this were a sign to them that they too ought to suspend "the operations which they were about to enter upon. And "such was the practice in those days, as we find from the "passage, 'enquiring of his piece of wood; and his staff will "tell him,' שׂוֹאֵל בְּעֵצוֹ וּבַמֶּקְלוֹ יִגִּיד לוֹ; that is, such a person "was in the habit of throwing his walking-stick into the air, or "shooting an arrow upwards, and observing by its fall the "direction in which the wind had carried it, or whether it fell "down to him again if there was no wind, and then regard- "ing it as a sign. Vide Ezek. xxi. 21, 'The king of "Babylon stood at the parting of the way (trivium) to use "divination; he made his arrows bright,' &c. in allusion to the "method of divination by arrows. With respect to these per- "sons the Preacher says that we must not attend to the vanities



nem quo loco ceciderit ibidem manebit. Qui ven- 4  
tum observat forsitan non serat, et qui nubes spectat  
forsitan non metat. Quemadmodum venti cursum 5

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“ of diviners; for that such ideas have no reality in them, and  
 “ such practices will give us no true information about the future  
 “ in the affairs of men; but that if the clouds are full of rain,  
 “ all we can know from them is that they will pour it out on  
 “ the ground; and similarly the fall of the staff whether north-  
 “ ward or southward cannot afford any sign or intimation. It  
 “ is certain that, wherever the piece of wood falls, there it will  
 “ lie; this is all we can know from its falling; but by its  
 “ falling it gives us no information with regard to any matter  
 “ further than this either for good or harm. Another Rabbi  
 “ whom I have consulted explains this passage differently. He  
 “ connects it with the last clause of the preceding verse, and  
 “ says, it means, ‘You must not imagine that there is danger  
 “ only in marine trade; on dry land too you cannot tell what  
 “ evil or misfortune may happen. If you are sowing your field,  
 “ you cannot tell whether the clouds may be full of rain, and  
 “ interrupt your work by pouring it down; or whether a  
 “ stormy wind may arise, and a great tree be blown down;  
 “ and then he who is walking by the way cannot tell whether  
 “ it will fall northward or southward, and all his alarm and  
 “ anxiety will be useless, for the tree will lie in the place  
 “ where it falls. For these reasons a man should not indulge in  
 “ fruitless and causeless apprehension.’ Other Rabbins have ex-  
 “ plained it still differently. But with none of the interpretations  
 “ have I been able to reconcile the position in this verse of the  
 “ accents which denote pauses; for the word יִרְקִי ought to have  
 “ had the athnach, and the word בַּצֶּפֶן the zakeph, in order  
 “ for each predicate to be connected with its respective subject  
 “ according to the general rule. But agreeably with the pauses of

בַּצִּפּוֹן מְקוֹם שִׁיפּוֹל הָעֵץ שָׁם יְהוּא : שֹׁמֵר רוּחַ 4  
 לֹא יִזְרַע וְרֵאָה בְּעֵבִים לֹא יִקְצֹר : בְּאֶשֶׁר אֵינֶנָּה 5

“the accents as they stand in our text it is requisite that the  
 “latter subject, viz. ‘the place where it falls,’ should refer to ‘the  
 “cloud’s being full of water,’ as well as to the ‘falling of the  
 “tree;’ and this is not in accordance with any of the methods  
 “of interpretation which I have noticed. In the next verse he  
 “proceeds to dissuade from attention to the same method of  
 “divination, observing that he who watches the wind, and does  
 “not choose to sow until it comes from a particular quarter, will  
 “sometimes wait in vain for it to do so, and consequently never  
 “sow or not till it is too late; and that similarly he who gazes  
 “at the clouds and consults the forms which he observes in  
 “them, will sometimes reap no harvest.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 3. As יְהִי is formed from הָיָה with the apocopation of the final ה, so יְהוּא is formed from הָיוּא, the א not admitting of apocopation. The form corresponding with יְהִיָּה would be יְהוּאָה. The meaning of these two verbs is the same.

Mendlessohn even here does not venture to suggest an alteration of the accents, though he implies that he is unable to suggest any sense for the passage in accordance with them. His meaning above where he says that the accents in this verse do not answer to the obviously true correspondence of subjects and predicates in it, is that if we stop the verse agreeably with the accents it will be on this wise, “If the clouds are full (and) they pour down rain on the ground and if the rod fall northward or southward, in the place where the rod falls there it will lie.”

Ver. 4. יִזְרַע and יִקְצֹר are clearly in the potential mood.

Ver. 5. “This is an inverted form of expression, and as

יוֹלֵעַ מִה־דֶּרֶךְ הָרוּחַ כַּעֲצָמִים בְּבֶטֶן הַמֵּלֶאכָה כָּכָה  
 לֹא תֵרַע אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַכֹּל :  
 6 בַּפֶּקֶר זָרַע אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ וְלַעֲרֹב אֶל־תַּנְחַ יָרֵךְ כִּי אֵינְךָ  
 יוֹלֵעַ אִי זֶה יִכְשֹׁר הִזֶּה אוֹזֶה וְאִם־שְׁנִיָּהֶם כָּאֶחָד  
 טוֹבִים :

"such must be interpreted backwards from the end to the be-  
 ginning; and its meaning then is, 'Thou canst know nothing  
 of any one of the purposes of God before it is developed  
 and has actually appeared in existence, just as thou knowest  
 no more about the course of the wind than thou dost about the  
 fetus and its formation in the womb of the mother.' " (At  
 the same time then he asserts that the degree of our acquaint-  
 ance with the course of the wind, and therefore of our power  
 to prognosticate by means of it, is the same as that of our  
 acquaintance with the progress of a formation which nature  
 has concealed from us, and states that we can know no more  
 of any of the purposes of God beforehand than we do about  
 either of these subjects.) "The order of the two members of the  
 sentence introduced by the adverbs כָּכָה and כַּאֲשֶׁר respec-  
 tively is inverted in the same way as the order has been in  
 the phrases כָּכָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, 'The land of Egypt was  
 like the garden of the Lord;' בְּשֹׁפְחָהּ כְּבִגְדָתָהּ, 'The mis-  
 tress shall be as her maid;' בְּקוֹנָהּ כְּמוֹכֵר, 'The seller shall  
 be as the buyer;' these particles being used to compare  
 sometimes the first with the second, and sometimes the second  
 with the first. Yarchi ably connects this passage with the  
 preceding verses thus; he says, 'If it were possible that thou  
 shouldst be acquainted with the laws of motion of the atmo-  
 sphere of the world, so as to be sure in what direction it ought

ignoras sicut conformationes inclusas in utero gravidæ; ita Dei qui facit omnia non opus intelligis.

6 Mane semen tuum semina; et vespere ne remittas manum tuam; nescis enim utrum, hocce an illud, magis fuerit prosperum, sive utrumque æque bonum sit.

“to move agreeably to them at the time of thy augury, and “thou shouldest find that its motion were then contrary to the “laws of nature, in that case it might perhaps be at least a sort “of sign to thee; but if thou dost not comprehend the nature of “its course, what sign can it possibly furnish thee in thy divinations? perhaps its then direction may be exactly that of “nature.’ Yarchi interprets the word עֲצָמִים in this place as “derived from עָצַם in the phrase עֹצֵם עֵינָיו, ‘closing his eyes;’ “and therefore meaning ‘the inclosures in the womb.’” Mendlesohn.

NOTE. We have already had the word עֲשֶׂה in the sense “to appoint,” and here again מַעֲשֶׂה must mean “appointment,” “purpose.”

Ver. 6. “He means, ‘Do not give attention to the signs “of divination and augury; but do thy own business in every “respect; sow thy seed in the morning, and in the evening let “not thy hand be remiss. Be not indolently slack in doing “thy duty; and if thou be not prosperous to-day, perhaps thou “wilt be so to-morrow, and if thou lose in the morning perhaps “thou mayest gain in the evening.’” Mendlesohn.

NOTE. When אֵי is prefixed to the pronoun זֶה, it gives it the sense of an interrogative pronoun, “which,” “whether of two,” (הַזֶּה אוֹ-הַזֶּה, “this or that”). We find it united with other pronouns and adverbs, and similarly modifying their signification.

### SECTIO DECIMA QUINTA.

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Suave quoque lumen est, et bonum oculis est 7  
videre solem; etsi enim multos annos vivat homo, 8  
omnibus illis lætetur; at simul recordetur tenebra-  
rum dies, quod forsitan multi futuri sint, et irritum  
quodcunque *ei* obvenierit (*vel* “et quodcunque præ-

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Ver. 7. “‘The light also, &c.’ After exhorting to dili-  
“gence in mercantile and agricultural employments, he proceeds  
“to encourage men to tranquillity and cheerfulness of heart.  
“He says, ‘The light too is sweet, and it is a good thing to  
“look at the sun when a man is reposing after his work is  
“done.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Solomon means that while industry is very com-  
mendable, tranquil enjoyment of life and the beauties of creation  
is also a good thing.

Ver. 8, 9. “‘For though a man’s life be long, it is proper  
“that he should be cheerful through the whole of it; but that in  
“the midst of his cheerfulness he should bear in mind that the  
“days of distress and adversity may be many, and that then  
“all that has past and happened to him would be in vain; for  
“in the days of adversity man does not remember the days of  
“past prosperity.’ He then repeats this advice with the ac-  
“companying warning. He says, ‘Rejoice, (be cheerful,) O  
“youth, in thy childhood;’ know that melancholy and morose-  
“ness is not the service of God, but that on the contrary it is  
“one of the commandments of God to us to receive our bless-



## THE FIFTEENTH SECTION.

וּמִתּוֹק הָאֹזֶר וְטוֹב לְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ : 7  
 כִּי אִם־שָׁנִים הִרְבֵּה יַחִיהַ הָאָדָם בְּכֹל יְשֻׁמָּה 8  
 וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יָמָיו הַחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי־הִרְבֵּה יָהִי כָל־שָׁבָא הָבֵל :

“ings from him in gladness and cheerfulness of heart; as ‘the friend’ says to ‘king Hakoozar,’ (2nd Dialogue, chap. 20.)  
 “ ‘The holy law has not commanded us to be Pharisees,’ ” (this name פְּרוּשׁ was at first used with praise, and applied to every sober man who separates himself from the grosser pleasures of the world; and the training oneself in such a manner of life was called פְּרוּשׁוּת. But afterwards those who hypocritically shewed themselves too punctilious in their abstemiousness and fell into the grossest self-conceit were called פְּרוּשִׁים, “Puritans,” as a stigmatizing epithet. See Bernard’s Maimonides), “ ‘but to pursue the middle path, and to give its just portion to each of the powers of the body and mind, without excess or superfluity; for it is impossible for the portion allotted to one faculty to be excessive without that allotted to another portion becoming consequently defective. Thus he who inclines beyond the bound of moderation to the faculty of carnal desire must diminish and encroach upon the faculty of reflection and observation, and vice versâ; and he who inclines in excess to the love of power and victory will lessen the efficiency of some other faculty; and much fasting is not necessarily doing God

9 שִׂמְחָה בְּחַנּוּךְ בִּלְדוֹתֶיךָ וַיְטִיבֶךָ לִבְךָ בַּיָּמִי בְּחַוְרוֹתֶיךָ  
וַהֲלֵךְ בְּדַרְכֵי לִבְךָ וּבְמַרְאֵי עֵינֶיךָ וְדַע כִּי עַל-כָּל-

“service in a man whose bodily appetites are feeble, and whose  
“powers are debilitated and frame emaciated. But it is proper  
“for such a man to indulge and cherish his corporeal frame.  
“Nor again is it serving God to reject wealth, provided that  
“wealth come to a man in a right way, without excessive  
“anxiety and toil on his part, and without his having been led  
“to negligence of learning, wisdom, and good works in the  
“acquirement of it. Indeed for one who has the additional  
“expense of providing for children, and whose purpose it is to  
“spend his wealth for God, the acquisition of property is most  
“proper. The sum and substance of this matter is that thy  
“duty is made up of fear, love, and cheerfulness; and in each  
“of these states of feeling thou shouldest approach thy God;  
“nor is the humiliation and abstinence practised on days of  
“fasting more acceptable than the cheerfulness suitable to sab-  
“baths and feasts, provided that thy cheerfulness be under due  
“regulation, and with a perfect heart,’ and so on. (He has gone  
“to some length in explaining this matter, as you may see by  
“reference to the passage itself). The radical principle then  
“is that the purpose of our heart must be to serve the God of  
“heaven, and that it be constantly borne in mind that he who  
“‘tries the reins and heart’ will judge the secrets of our hearts,  
“and call us to account with respect to all the meditations and  
“reflections and passions of our souls, for our cheerfulness and  
“our melancholy, our sorrow and our gladness; and this is the  
“meaning of the passage we are now considering; ‘Rejoice, be  
“cheerful, O youth, in thy childhood, for those are the days of  
“cheerfulness, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy

9 teritum fuerit"). Lætare, juvenis adolescentiâ tuâ, et mens tua te exhilaret in juvenili tuâ ætate, et i quorsumcunque te ferat animus tuus et oculorum tuorum visus; at scito Deum te in judicium de his

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"childhood, and thou mayest also walk in the ways of thy heart and in the satisfaction of thy eyes without being guilty of sin, if thou ever remember and forget not that God will bring thee to judgment concerning all these things, and that thou art about to give account before him as to what portion thou hast assigned to each faculty of body and soul; for the natural propensities of man, and the enjoyment derived from the sense of sight were given to him at the beginning of the creation for a purpose and an end pleasing to the Creator; and if a man bear in mind the day of his account to which I have alluded, he will be sure to direct them aright, and in such a way as will be for his highest good and his happiness in the life to come, and will assign to each of them as he ought to do its due measure and portion without excess or defect.' And as to the injunction of Scripture, Numb. xv. 29, 'Ye shall not go astray (תֹּר) after your own hearts and your own eyes;' there can be no doubt that all that is forbidden is departure from the middle course, and that it is implied by the next words, 'which ye used to go a whoring after,' that they do not lead man into sin unless he goes a whoring after them, i. e. pursues them to excess and exclusively to the forgetfulness of his duty to God; which he will not do if he recollects that for all these things God will bring him to account." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Ver. 8. Some translators render כָּל-שֶׁבַע הָיָל, "All that cometh," or "is about to be," "will be in vain;" as if it were an independent proposition. But if this were the case there

omnibus adducturum esse. Et amove ex animo tuo 10  
 mœrorem, et dispelle malum a corpore tuo; nam ju-<sup>CAP.</sup>  
 ventus et adolescentia evanescent; at memento quo-<sup>XII.</sup> 1  
 que Creatoris tui in diebus juventutis tuæ, quamdiu  
 neque dies mali veniunt, neque accedunt anni de  
 quibus dices, “Nil est mihi in illis gratum,” quam- 2  
 diu non obscurus fit sol atque lux et luna et

would have been an athnack under יָדוֹי. I have therefore taken these words, as Mendlessohn has done, to be included under יִזְכֹּר כִּי (י being omitted with an abruptness frequent in Hebrew; see Note at xii. 9) and בָּא to be not the participle but the preterite. The sense will then be, “Let him at the same time bear in mind that many may be the days of darkness to come, (and) every thing which has past (all his past happiness and cheerfulness) fruitless and in vain;” where the “days of darkness” are those of adversity in this life, not of punishment in the life to come.

Ver. 9. The Keri on בְּמֵרָאִי is בְּמֵרָאֵה.

Ver. 10. “Youth will not last for ever, but presently “vanish away; therefore you should improve it while it lasts. שְׁחֹרָת is derived from שָׁחַר, ‘aurora,’ as in the phrase “בִּי שָׁחַר עָלָה, ‘for dawn arose;’ or in the verse, ‘Then shall “thy light break forth as the morning dawn (שָׁחַר).’ Just as “youth was compared to the dawn of morning, old age was “compared to evening, as in the verse, ‘In the morning sow “thy seed, and in the evening remit not thy hand,’ alluding to “the industrious employment of old age as well as youth. Or “possibly שְׁחֹרָת may be cognate with the word שָׁחֹר, ‘black,’ “with reference to the hair, which in youth has not become “hoary.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. This verse means, “Do not distress and vex thyself

אֵלֶּה יְבִיאוּךָ הָאֵלֶּהִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט : וְהָסַר פְּעַם מִלְפָּנֶיךָ 10  
 וְהֵעֵבֶר רָעָה מִבְּשָׂרְךָ בִּי-הַיְלָלוֹת וְהַשְׁחָרוֹת הַבָּל :  
 CHAP. XII.  
 וְזָכַר אֶת-בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ בְּחַרוֹתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִבְאֹו 1  
 יָמֶיךָ הָרָעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵין-לִי בָהֶם  
 חֶפְזִין : עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִחְשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאֹר וְהִירָח 2

in thy youth, but enjoy it knowing that like the morning-dawn it will soon vanish away." It need hardly be observed that יָלוֹת and שְׁחָרוֹת are in the singular number. I have rendered the latter "the morning of life."

Ver. 1. " 'The evil days' means 'old age.' " Mendlessohn.

NOTE. This verse is closely connected with that which precedes it, and Solomon thus the third time exhorts the young to be cheerful in the enjoyment of life, along with a constant recollection of duties to be performed, and of the transitory nature of all earthly things. Similarly in Section x. he three times inculcates the duty of neither judging harshly of others, nor supposing that all the world are just and good. Some manuscripts and editions read בּוֹרְאֶךָ, striking out the Yod, in order to make it in the singular number, This however is unnecessary, as we find in Is. liv. 5, יְהוָה בֹּעֲלֶיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ, "The Lord is thy husband *and* thy maker," where "husband" and "maker" are both in the plural number. And in Prov. ix. 1, הָכְמוֹת, "wisdom," is used as a singular. There are instances of a "plural of excellence."

Ver. 2. "By reason of old age the moisture of the eyes "becomes thickened; and often it seems to him in consequence "as if clouds passed before his eyes which hide the light, or "in other words impair his sight; and this moisture collects "till it runs down; and this happens repeatedly, as is implied



3 וְהַכּוֹכָבִים וְשָׁבוּ הָעָנָנִים אַחֲרֵי הַגֶּשֶׁם: בַּיּוֹם שִׁינְעוּ  
 שְׁמֵרֵי הַפֶּתַח וְהִתְעוּתוֹ אֲנִשֵּׁי הַחֵל וּבִטְלָו הַטְּחָנוֹת  
 4 כִּי מַעֲטוֹ וְהִשְׁכּוּ קִרְאוֹת בְּאַרְבּוֹת: וְסָגְרוּ דִלְתֵּיהֶם  
 בְּשׁוֹק בְּשִׁפְלָ קוֹל הַטְּחָנָה וְיָקוּם לְקוֹל הַצִּפּוֹר וַיִּשְׁחוּ

“by the expression, ‘The clouds come again after the discharge of tears.’ For did not the same cause of dimness recur, the discharge of the moisture from the eyes would cause the power of sight to return in perfection.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Observe that the ו before שָׁבוּ is conversive, and brings שָׁבוּ into the same tense as תִּתְחַשֵּׁךְ, the last verb which preceded it in the same sentence.

Ver. 3. “‘The keepers of the house,’ signifies the hands and arms, because these defend the body, and prevent harm from happening to it; and ‘the strong men,’ is a name for the thighs by which the whole body is supported and which in old age become bent from excessive weakness. ‘Those that look out at windows’ are the eyes. יִנְעוּ is from the same word וַיַּעַז which we find in Esth. v. 9, לֹא קָם וְלֹא יָע, ‘He rose not, nor moved,’ and it means, ‘trembling and quaking will take hold of them.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Mendlessohn says nothing in his commentary about מַעֲטוֹ. The Rabbinic commentators are very unwilling to allow it an intransitive signification, because it is in the Pihel conjugation. Such instances, viz. where the Kal and Pihel have both an intransitive sense, are rare, but they do sometimes occur (see Note at x. 10); and this is probably one of them. They would translate it, “Because they have made small (i. e. ground) corn so long,” or “because they have *already* ground the corn,”

sidera, neque rediunt post pluviam nubes; *sicut fiet*  
 3 quo tempore domûs custodes tremebunt, et viri  
 robusti incurvescent et cessabunt molitrices quum  
 paucæ factæ erunt, et caligabunt spectantes per  
 4 fenestras, claudenturque fores in plateâ submisso  
 molitionis sonitu, et subsiliet *dominus* ad avis vocem,

or else, "because they have diminished *their grinding*." The last rendering involves a truism, and the two first are very far-fetched. It is better to render כִּי, "when," (a sense which it must bear in Hos. xi. 1,) and מֵעַט, "they have become few." And since י before each of the other verbs is conversive, כִּי מֵעַט will then mean, "when they shall have become few." Solomon in this and the next verse compares a man to a regal mansion, and his limbs and senses to the several classes of its household, the thighs to "the men of war," the arms to "the porters at the gate," the teeth to "the maidens that grind corn," the ears and voice to "the singing girls," the eyes to "the ladies who sit and look out at the windows;" for מְהַנִּיחַ and דְּרָאוֹת are both feminine, and the first may mean "ancillæ molitrices." Before ver. 3, understand "as," i. e. "as it will be."

Ver. 4. "The doors' signify the outward apertures of the body, and 'the sound of the grinding' refers to the digestion of food, and its being ground and dissolved in the stomach; for when this is impeded all the bodily organs are obstructed in their functions. 'And one will start up at a bird's note,' means that the old man will be roused from his sleep even by the chirping of a bird. 'And all the daughters of song shall be brought low.' This implies that the pipes of the lungs from which the voice proceeds shall fail in performing their functions; for an old man from weakness is unable to sing or exert his voice." Mendlessohn.

NOTE. The metaphor of the house is here carried on.

et deprimentur omnes cantûs filiæ, timebuntque 5  
etiam alta, et terrores erunt in viâ, et florebit  
amygdala, et pigrescet (*vel* onusta sibi fiet *vel* onustam  
se reddet) cicada, et extinguetur concupiscentia,

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The old man is compared to a house whose inmates are in a state of consternation and dismay, where the usual domestic operations are suspended, the doors are closed as in time of mourning, the lord of the mansion starts with anxious fear at every noise, and all sounds of joy are mute. I have rendered יָקוּם “one will start up,” but it probably refers to the master of the house, and therefore metaphorically to the mind which animates the old man, which is so easily alarmed and agitated; while the other clauses of these two verses refer to the domestics of the house, and metaphorically to the limbs and senses of the body. “The sound of the grinding being low,” refers either, as Mendlessohn takes it, to the operations of digestion, or to the mastication of food in the mouth, since whichever of these be suspended the consequence expressed by סָגְרוּ דְּלִתִּים will equally take place. Some have interpreted בְּנֹת בִּישּׁוֹק to mean “the ears.” Probably these as well as “the lungs and throat” are intended. They are all expressed by “the powers of song.” It would be useless to enumerate instances in which the word בַּת, “daughter,” is used in Hebrew merely to express the subject of which the predicate is some noun of quality with which it is in a state of construction. Observe that the first יָ in this verse is conversive and the others are not, so that all the verbs have a future signification. The word דְּלִתִּים is in the dual number with an obvious allusion.

Ver. 5. “The old man is constantly in alarm from the  
“risings and inequalities in the road lest he should stumble  
“over them, and continually meets with something to terrify

כָּל-בְּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר : גַּם מִגֵּבָה יִרְאוּ וְהִתְחַתִּים בְּדֶרֶךְ 5  
וַיֵּנֶאץ הַשֶּׁקֶר וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲגָב וְתַפֵּר הָאֲבִיוֹנָה כִּי-הִלָּךְ

“him on his way. The word **הִתְחַתִּים** is from **חָתַת**; the first  
“and third letters of which are doubled, and the middle one  
“suppressed. ‘The almond-tree shall flower;’ **וַיֵּנֶאץ** is the Hiphil  
“from **נִנָּץ**, the **א** preceded by *tzere* being put for **י** preceded  
“by *chirek*. So we find in the Canticles, **הִנְצוּ הָרְמוֹנִים**, ‘The  
“pomegranates have flowered.’ The allusion is to the hoary  
“hair which comes quickly upon a man just as the almond-  
“tree flowers early, before the other trees; for in Jer. i. 11,  
“‘The rod of an almond-tree’ is used as an emblem of speedy  
“accomplishment. The commentators explain **וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲגָב** by  
“**אִיבְרֵי הַהוֹלָדָה**, i. e. ‘**אִיבְרֵי הַהוֹלָדָה** will become a  
“burdensome appendage to *him* ;’ and agreeably with this ren-  
“dering we may understand after **תַּפֵּר** the word **בְּרִיתָהּ**, which is  
“often united with it, and translate **וְתַפֵּר הָאֲבִיוֹנָה**, ‘and carnal  
“desire will break its covenant with the body,’ i. e. ‘will desert  
“it.’ For **אֲבִיוֹנָה** comes from **אָבָה**, ‘cupivit,’ the place of the  
“**ה** being supplied by **י**, (as is the case in the inflexions of  
“such verbs), and means ‘desire,’ ‘carnal appetite.’ Solomon  
“next remarks that this timidity and imbecility arise from  
“the apprehension of death, and that all these symptoms of  
“decay come before as precursors of death, like the hired  
“mourners who walk in procession before a funeral, and that  
“they visit the body as if to warn it of approaching dissolu-  
“tion. Now if I were sure that **חֲגָב** and **אֲבִיוֹנָה** were names  
“of well-known fruit-trees, I should have been for interpreting  
“the passage in this way, ‘that the symptoms of old age come  
“quickly upon us, just as (**י**) the almond-tree flowers, the

# 6 הָאָרֶז אֶל-בֵּית עֲלָמוֹ וְסִבְבוֹ בִּשְׁוֹק הַסּוּפְרִים : עֲר

“**הָאָרֶז** ‘becomes loaden’ with fruit, and ‘the **אֶבְיוֹנָה** bears fruit’ in a very short space of time;’ and then **תִּפֹּר** instead of being the Hiphil from **פֹּר** would necessarily be derived from the verb of which **פָּרִי** is the verbal noun, viz. **פָּרָה**, which would not give **תִּפֹּר** regularly, but **תִּפְּרָה** or **תִּתְּפֹר**; this however would not have been of much importance. It is true that the Rabbins called a certain kind of caper by the name **אֶבְיוֹנָה**, (possibly on account of its medicinal qualities) but there is no evidence whatever that **הָאָרֶז** was ever used as the name of a tree, and consequently we must interpret the passage as above.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Another reason why the old man should be afraid of what is high, is his short and asthmatic breath which torments him in walking up-hill. The metaphor of the house ends with the last verse. The **שֶׁקֶר** ought to mean some tree with a white blossom as well as one that flowers early, whereas the almond has a pink blossom; and the property of flowering early is inapplicable here except on the second interpretation proposed by Mendlessohn which he decides to reject. This interpretation would certainly be far-fetched, on account of the extreme abruptness which it would compel us to recognize in the original.

**סָבַל** is “to carry,” “to be burdened,” and according to Buxtorf signifies in the Hithpahel, “to make oneself burdensome,” i. e. “to cause another to be burdened,” but it would be better to render it, “to become a load or burden to oneself.”

**הָאָרֶז** occurs in other passages of Scripture, and means there “a locust or grasshopper,” a creature remarkable for the nimbleness of its movements, and hence the Rabbinic explanation of it in this verse. Setting aside however that explanation as not re-



(quum abibit homo in domum suam æternam) et  
6 *jamjam* circumibunt in plateâ lugentes; quamdiu

markable for good taste, we may suppose the word **הָנָב** metaphorically to express, "one as nimble as a grasshopper," and **וְיִסְתָּבֵל הָהָנָב** would then mean, "and he who was once all agility and vigour will become a burden to himself, i. e. become tardy in all his movements, as if he carried a heavy load;" literally, "the very grasshopper will become inactive." If we choose to render **הָנָב** literally, like **אֲבִיּוֹנָה** which follows, we must take Buxtorf's interpretation of **וְיִסְתָּבֵל** and translate "the grasshopper (the lightest of creatures) would be burdensome to him," i. e. "its weight would be felt by him." I have adopted the former sense in the English Version.

For instances of the Hiphil of **פָּוַר** united with **בְּרִית**, vide Is. xxxiii. 8, Ezek. xvii. 16, where the Hiphil means "to frustrate," "to cause to fail." Perhaps it may mean here simply "to fail" intransitively, and then **בְּרִית** need not be understood.

I prefer to render **כִּי** in this verse "when," (a sense which it must bear in Hos. xi. 1) rather than "because." Mendlesohn adopts the latter, and explains it by saying that the old man's impotence and timidity arise from apprehension of approaching death. But this is a far-fetched notion and hardly a correct statement; besides **הָאָדָם**, as I have already observed, always means "man," abstractedly, or "a man," generally, which is its sense here, whereas if **כִּי** be rendered "because," we must take it to mean "the man," "the particular old man spoken of before," which it cannot do, and I therefore render the passage, "when a man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners (precursors of death) will be, as it were, passing round the streets," i. e. general decay will

neque longe distat *ab aquâ* funis argenteus, neque conteritur cisterna aurea, neque frangitur hydria

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be giving notice of his approaching end, just as mourners of the approach of a corpse. Observe that this verse is all included under the phrase, “in the day that,” at the beginning of the last verse. “The house of his eternity,” is put for “his eternal house,” just as the “days of my vanity,” is for “my vain,” i. e. “transitory days.” The interposition of the participle הֹלֵךְ, which itself is used as a future, does not deprive the ׀ before סָבְבִי of its conversive power, any more than the intervening clauses containing an infinitive mood and a participle between the future יִסְלַח and the word וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי in 2 Kings v. 18, deprive the latter word of the future signification given to it by the ׀ on account of the preceding future יִסְלַח, (a circumstance which determines that Naaman is there entreating indulgence for the future, and not merely forgiveness for the past). In fact the clause כִּי הוֹלֵךְ וכו', “when a man is going to his eternal home,” may be read as in parentheses.

Ver. 6. “יִרְתֵּק,” the reading of the Keri, means, ‘shall “become entangled, like the links of a chain,’ (רִתּוֹק is ‘a chain,’) and the reading of the Chetib יִרְחֵק means, ‘shall be “far from reaching to the water,” i. e. be too short to reach it “by reason of its being entangled or from any other cause. The “sense is therefore the same whichever reading and rendering “be adopted. The metaphor is here taken from the working “of a well and the drawing of water. For the pail is fastened “with a cord, and this is passed round a wheel, and by means “of this contrivance the water is drawn up from the well and “then poured out into a bowl or cistern which stands before “the well. And if the cord be too short from any cause, or “the pail or the wheel or the bowl for receiving the water be

אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִרְחֹק הַבֵּל הַפֶּסֶף וְתִרְיָן גִּלְתִּי הַזֶּהב וְתִשְׁבֵּר

“ broken, the well is no longer of any use. Such is the meta-  
 “ phor; and in all probability the thing signified by it is the  
 “ human heart with its veins and arteries, and the circulation of  
 “ blood through the body carried on by means of them; for the  
 “ arteries convey the blood from the left cavity of the heart  
 “ to all the limbs of the body small and great, and the veins  
 “ again collect the blood from all these limbs, and return it to  
 “ the right cavity of the heart; and from thence the blood  
 “ goes up through an artery to the lungs (there to be purified);  
 “ and from the lungs it returns by means of a vein to the left  
 “ cavity of the heart; and thus it goes on a circuit round and  
 “ round from the heart to the limbs and from the limbs to the  
 “ heart; and performs this circuit at least twenty-four or thirty  
 “ times in an hour; as is well known to anatomists, who have  
 “ carefully investigated the structure of the human frame, and  
 “ have shewn forth the wonders of God in the formation of  
 “ the choicest of his creatures. And it is ascertained that it is  
 “ impossible for man to live if these vessels are suspended in  
 “ their action, for the motion of the heart is the fountain of  
 “ man’s life, and if the blood be at rest, it is impossible for the  
 “ heart to continue in motion, and vice versâ; so that the wise  
 “ man justly compared the revolution and circulation of the  
 “ blood by a poetic metaphor to the system of a wheel, rope,  
 “ pail, and bowl for drawing up water out of a well, and de-  
 “ signated the death of man consequent on the suspension of the  
 “ motion of the heart and lungs and arteries as ‘the entangle-  
 “ ment of the rope,’ and ‘the breaking of the wheel, pail, or  
 “ bowl;’ by any, or all of which circumstances the working of  
 “ a well is interrupted. And if we cannot establish an exact  
 “ correspondence in detail between all the features of the figure

7 כִּד עַל-הַמָּבֹועַ וְנָרַץ הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל-הַבּוֹר : וַיֵּשֶׁב הָעָפָר  
עַל-הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁתְיָהּ וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר  
8 נִתְּנָה : הֵבֵל הַבָּלִים אָמַר הַקּוֹהֶלֶת הֵכֵל הָבֵל :

“and the thing signified, we must recollect that it is usual  
“in poetry to introduce additional circumstances in the figure,  
“though there be no separate or distinct features in the thing  
“signified to correspond to them, and that this repeatedly  
“happens not only in works of song and poetry, but even in  
“the allegorical writings of the prophets; as Maimonides tells  
“us in the opening of his ‘Book of Instruction.’ He says, ‘that  
“the metaphors of prophecy are of two kinds; that there are  
“some in which every part of the metaphor corresponds to  
“some particular feature of the thing signified; and others  
“where the metaphor taken as a whole corresponds only to  
“the general sense of the thing signified; and in this latter  
“species of metaphor many details will occur not a word of which  
“will give us any further information about the things signified,  
“but which are inserted merely for the adorning of the figure,  
“and the due arrangement of its portions, or from an excessive  
“degree of care in concealing the hidden meaning of it, viz.  
“the thing signified by it, &c.’ Quem vide.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. תָּרַץ. Here Yarchi reads תָּרַץ, or at least uses  
this word for the other in his commentary. It is from the root  
רָצַץ, (which must signify here in the Kal, “to be broken,”  
though it usually means “to break,”) so that, as a Rabbinic  
commentator remarks, kibbutz is here unaccountably put for  
cholem, as the regular form is after the paradeigm קָבַב which  
makes תָּסַב. Observe that some of the Rabbins called “shurek”  
the מֶלֶא פִּי or “mouthful,” and that those who did so called

ad fontem, neque conteritur trochlea ad puteum,  
 7 necdum redit pulvis ad terram qualis fuerat aut  
 8 redit spiritus ad Deum qui eum dederat. Vanissima,  
 inquit Concionator, (*vel* "Collector"), vanitas sunt  
 omnia.

the "kibbutz" "shurek," (not using the name "kibbutz" at all,) and the cholem by its own name. Others on the contrary, as Yarchi, (vide his commentary on Exod. xv.) called the "cholem" מְלֵא פֹים and the other two vowels by their usual names. And accordingly Buxtorf asserts that מְלֵא פֹים means the "cholem," which in the commentary on another place in this book it cannot possibly be. (Yarchi at that passage in Exod. xv. calls the point over רֹאשׁ and נֹאד a מְלֵא פֹים, by which must be meant a cholem.)

גֵּלַת would seem to be here a large vessel to receive the water drawn up in the pail, which stood before the well, and into which the כֶּדַר was emptied. We find this word in the same sense, viz. a vessel for containing fluid, in Judg. i. 15, and Zech. iv. 3.

נָרַץ would regularly be the preterite or participle Niphal from רוֹץ, "to run," after the form נָמַג from מוּג, or נָבֵן from בּוֹן. But in this place it must be an irregular form for נָרַץ the preterite Niphal of רָצַץ.

Ver. 7. "Here the wise king develops his opinion in a  
 "form agreeable with the law and with sound wisdom, that  
 "the soul of man is given to him by the Former of all  
 "things, and that it is not a mere accidental quality of the  
 "body, but a being distinct and created separately from it,  
 "not circumscribed by the limits of space, but surviving the  
 "death of the body, and then returning to God who gave it,  
 "when the body returns to the dust. And now it is clear that



### SECTIO DECIMA SEXTA.

---

Et quo sapientior fiebat Concionator (*vel* “Col-lector”) eo magis usque scientiam docebat populum

---

“my interpretation of former parts of this book was correct, and “that it was never Solomon’s intention to raise doubts about “the fundamental principles of the law, without afterwards “removing them.” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. Observe that this as well as the whole of the last verse is included under the phrase עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא, “quamdiu non.” Mendlessohn seems to treat it too much as an isolated maxim, and to be inclined to extract more from it than it really contains. His previous interpretations of the passages he alludes to do not need any corroboration from this or any other passage.

NOTE. Ver. 8. We find the definite article ה here placed before קְהִלָּת, because in this place it is a noun of quality, whereas in vii. 27, where ה does not precede it, it is an abstract noun and means “a compilation,” or “the method of compilation.” Observe that the definite article ה never precedes abstract nouns. Besides in vii. 27, קְהִלָּת is marked as an abstract noun by being used as feminine, whereas here it is masculine.

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Ver. 9. “‘The more the Compiler became wise,’ the more “he taught the people knowledge, listened to it from others, (or “‘weighed it in the balances of reflection’) ‘investigated it by

## THE SIXTEENTH SECTION.

וְיִתֵּר שֶׁהָיָה קִהְלֵת הָנֶכֶם עוֹד לְמִרְדְּעַת אֶת-הָעָם 9

“his intelligence, and set in order many proverbs;” i. e. ‘composed’ them, ‘for he spake three thousand proverbs,’ the “object of all of which was either the instruction of others, “or the pursuit of wisdom and investigation. אֵין is either “derived from the same root as מֵאֵינִים, ‘balances,’ and signifies “that he weighed one portion of knowledge against another, “or from אֵין, ‘an ear,’ meaning that ‘he inclined his own ear “to hear,’ or that ‘he encouraged others to hear.’” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. יִתֵּר is here an adverb, as in the next verse but one, and means little more than “more,” “in a superior degree,” just as when used as a noun it denotes “superiority.”

The sense of “weighing” which Mendlessohn is here inclined to attach to אֵין is entirely Rabbinic, and the name of a balance in Hebrew is clearly owing to the circumstance of the two sides of a balance being compared to two ears, and not to its derivation from any word meaning “to weigh,” there being none such in use except by the Rabbins who have formed it from מֵאֵינִים, “balances.” Aben Ezra wishes to make the Pihel in אֵין and חָקַר bear a causative sense, and הָעָם be governed by them, and construes, “he taught the people knowledge, and made them listen to it and investigate it.” But the Pihel is a transitive and not necessarily a causative conjugation, and the

10 וְאֵן וְחָקַר תִּקֶּן מִשְׁלִים הִרְבֵּה : בִּקֵּשׁ קִהְלֹת לְמִצָּא

11 דְּבָרֵי־חֶפֶץ וְכָתוּב יִשָּׁר דְּבָרֵי אִמָּת : דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים

בְּדַרְבָּנֹת וּבְמִשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בְּעֲלֵי אֲסָפוֹת נִתְּנוּ

transitive sense is preserved by rendering the clause thus, “and listened *to it*, i. e. *knowledge (from others)* and investigated *it*,” i. e. “sought for *it* diligently;” supplying דַּעַת after אֵן and חָקַר. These two verbs cannot govern מִשְׁלִים, as appears from the zakeph over חָקַר, and the absence of ו before תִּקֶּן, (which is an instance of the same abruptness of construction as in ver. 8, where ו is omitted before כָּל שֶׁבֶא הִבֵּל); and אֵן cannot simply mean “gave ear,” intransitively.

תִּקֶּן in the Kal means “to be set right or in order,” and in the Pihel, transitively, “to set right,” “to arrange,” “compose,” “correct.” Perhaps it means that he collected and published a correct edition of them, as is more fully expressed in the next verse.

Ver. 10. “He means that after all his research he tried “to clothe the results of it in graceful expressions and pleasing “phrases, and, while he wrote words of truth, i. e. gave the “most veritable statements, to exhibit them in a correct style “of composition, and with all the sweetness of poetry, in order “that they might the better be acquired and retained by the “minds of the readers, and make the deeper impression.” Mendelssohn.

NOTE. כָּתוּב יִשָּׁר is literally, “written correctness,” i. e. “correctness of writing.” יִשָּׁר is in construction with דְּבָרֵי, (words of this form, as הֶחֱדָשׁ, “a month,” do not suffer any change in the state of construction; vide Hurwitz), and I accordingly render, “a correct style of writing words of truth.”

et auscultabat et perscrutabatur, *et multa componebat*  
 10 *proverbia*. Petivit Concionator invenire verba placen-  
 11 tia, et rectam veracium dictorum scripturam. Dicta  
 sapientum velut stimuli sunt, et velut clavi infixi  
*dicta* auctorum collectionum, tanquam ex unius cogi-

Ver. 11. “ ‘For the words of the wise are like goads in-  
 “fixed in the heart of the intelligent hearer;’ and as for the  
 “authors of compilations who select wise maxims from books  
 “and narrations, and publish collections of them, he says,  
 “ ‘Their words are like nails implanted in the soul of man;’  
 “and this cannot happen without their making some impression.  
 “As the wise man says to king Hakoozar, (5th Dialogue,  
 “chap. 5) ‘Attentive minds receive impressions from the  
 “warnings of the admonisher in the same degree as he ad-  
 “monishes in pleasing expressions; and every truthful admo-  
 “nition does at least some good; for if it sometimes fail in  
 “turning the rebellious from his evil deeds, still it lights up in  
 “his mind as it were a spark of fire, and he sees that such  
 “and such conduct of his was bad, and this is the first and  
 “therefore an important step in repentance, &c.’ (vid. Note at  
 “p. 352.) The word רֵעָה is probably used here in a sense cog-  
 “nate with that of רֵעִי in Ps. cxxxix. at the verse, ‘Thou un-  
 “derstandest my thoughts afar off,’ viz. in that of ‘a thinker,’  
 “ ‘a reflecting mind.’ And the sense of the passage will then be  
 “that ‘those proverbs, speeches, and rules of wisdom, though  
 “collected from many different quarters, agree in one respect,  
 “viz. of teaching wisdom, just as if they had all been promul-  
 “gated by one thinker and investigator.’ ” Mendlessohn.

NOTE. דָּרְבֹּן is “the point at the end of a goad;” the  
 handle was called מֶלֶךְ.

Mendlessohn understands דְּבָרִי as repeated before בְּעָלִי.

tatione edita essent. At magis quam hæc, studeas, 12  
mî filî, *rectè* admoneri; faciendi multos libros  
nullus est finis, atque multa inutilis eruditio *mera*  
corporis defatigatio.

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נִתְּנָו must be rendered either "as if they had been produced," or "they might have been produced," i. e. "edited."

Yarchi translates רֹעֶה "shepherd," and says it means "God," and construes the passage, "they have all been suggested by the one great shepherd." But if this were correct, and Solomon intended here to allude to inspired writings, he would not speak of them so disparagingly as he does in the next verse as compared with the admonitions of wise counsellors. This in fact was the error into which the Talmudic doctors fell, (vide Prolegom. page 33) in justifying from this passage the preference of the Oral Traditions to Canonical Scripture. Solomon speaks of works of philosophy in general.

The best parallel to the use of רֹעֶה in the sense which Mendlessohn here attaches to it is that of the same word in Hos. xii. 2, אֶפְרַיִם רֹעֶה רֵיחַ, "Ephraim is a thinker of wind," i. e. "has ideas of wind." Other instances of the same kind are Ps. xxxvii. 3, and Dan. v. 6, see Notes at i. 14, and vi. 6, where the word רְעִית, "an idea," is discussed.

Ver. 12. "But more than to all the contents of books  
"take heed, my son, to attend to the advice of wise counsel-  
"lors, and to walk in their ways. For recondite learning and  
"reading and research are not the fundamental and chief matter,  
"but practice. This it is which constitutes the radical principle  
"of all perfection. It is impossible for every thing to be con-  
"tained in books; and it is necessary for the wise man to hear  
"and increase learning for himself, not to confine himself ex-  
"clusively to the study of authors; for much study, without



מִרְעָה אַחֵר : וְיִתֵּר מִהֶמָּה בְּנֵי הַזֶּהָר עֲשׂוֹת סִפְרִים 12  
הַרְבֵּה אֵין קֵץ וְלִהְיוֹת הַרְבֵּה יִגְעַת בָּשָׂר :

“mental profit, wearies the flesh, and is of no good to body or  
“mind. לִהְיוֹת is ‘unprofitable reading and study.’” Mendles-  
sohn.

NOTE. יִתֵּר again is an adverb, “more.” “More than  
these” means “more than you study these.”

הַזֶּהָר is here, probably, the imperative, בְּנֵי being a voca-  
tive. Some take it to be an infinitive, and we must then con-  
strue, “more important than these (i. e. the study of these) is  
to be well advised,” i. e. “to hearken to good counsellors.” We  
have already had הַזֶּהָר in the sense, “to be well advised by  
others,” in chap. iv. 13. Solomon is here perhaps, either in  
the spirit of prophecy, or more probably from having already  
noticed his son’s unwise propensities, admonishing Rehoboam to  
have recourse to good counsellors rather than even to the books  
of wise men. Or this may be a general exhortation to practical  
prudence, as of higher importance than erudition. Some com-  
mentators rather ingeniously explain the first part of this verse  
thus, “And of whatever is more than these” i. e. “beside these”  
“beware, my son.” But the expression of so illiberal a sentiment  
cannot have been intended by Solomon. Besides it is clear that  
the Talmudists, whose opinion on the grammar and rendering of  
the passage must be respected, though we reject the inference  
they draw from the verse, did not understand the words יִתֵּר or  
הַזֶּהָר in this way; but that since they explained the passage  
as a statement of the superior excellence of oral counsel to the  
maxims derivable from books, they must have rendered יִתֵּר  
“more,” not “beside,” and הַזֶּהָר “to be well advised,” as  
Mendlessohn has done.

## THE SEVENTEENTH SECTION.

13 סֹפֶר דְּבַר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמַע אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים יֵרָא וְאֶת-  
 14 מִצֻּתָּיו שְׁמֹר כִּי-זֶה כָּל-הָאָדָם : כִּי אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה  
 הָאֱלֹהִים יָבֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט עַל כָּל-נִעְלָם אִם-טוֹב וְאִם-  
 רָע :

NOTE. Ver. 13. Here we have another of the Masoretic “literæ majusculæ.” The cabalistic sense attached to them by the Rabbins of indicating emphasis or importance is unusually applicable in this case. For some of their explanations of the reasons of the occurrence of the literæ majusculæ et minusculæ in each place where they are found, see Buxtorf’s *Tiberias*, or “Discussion on the Masora.” He omits the more curious and far-fetched.

דְּבַר means here the “subject” of the book.

כִּי זֶה כָּל-הָאָדָם is translated by some, “for this is the duty of all men,” “for this belongs to all men,” but it is more literally rendered, “for this is the whole of man,” i. e. “the sum and substance and end of man’s existence,” (as כָּל-הַיּוֹם means “the

## SECTIO DECIMA SEPTIMA.

13 Finem totius sermonis audiamus; Deum reve-  
rere, et præcepta ejus serva; hoc enim est totum  
14 hominis *officium*. Namque omne factum adducet  
Deus in judicium, de omni occulto *ejus proposito*  
sive malum sit sive bonum.

whole of the day, &c.") or, as the Rabbins express it, עיקר ותכלית האדם, "the foundation and end of man."

Ver. 14. על means "concerning," "with reference to," every secret motive. So it is used in Jer. ii. 35, הִנְנִי נִשְׁפָּט, אֹתָךְ עַל-אֲמָרֶךָ, "Behold, I am contending in judgment with thee concerning thy saying," i. e. "about what thou hast said," where the prophet is addressing Jerusalem. And in the same sense we have met with it several times in this book, as at iii. 18, עַל-דִּבְרֵת וכו', "Concerning the saying of the sons of men, &c." and vii. 10, "Thou wouldest not have asked wisely about this, עַל-זֶה."

The "סימן יתקן" occurs at the end of this verse; for an explanation of which see Prolegomena, page 90.

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NOTE. At chap. xi. 9, and xii. 11, Mendlesohn quotes certain Hebrew dialogues between king **הַמֶּלֶךְ** and a philosopher, who is there called his "friend." **בֵּן** or **הַבֵּן** is the name (probably a fictitious one) of a king who in these dialogues is supposed to have entered into controversy with a contemporary Jewish Rabbi, and to have been converted by him to Judaism. All this, as well as the arguments used in the controversy, is described in a very celebrated work, of which Rabbi Judah Aben Tibur is supposed to be the author or translator from the Arabic, and which Mendlesohn here quotes. This Rabbi it was who translated into Hebrew the *Moreh Nevochim* of Maimonides, which was written originally in Arabic; and the obscurity of his style accounts for the much greater difficulty of this book as read in the Hebrew than of the *Yad Hachazakah*, which was written in Hebrew by Maimonides.

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# AN INDEX

OF

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The following are specimens of Mendlessohn's Commentary  
in the Rabbinic Hebrew.

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Chap. iv. 1. "ד." א, page 189.

אמר הנה הבחינה בתולדת הנפש לא תוליד את לב האדם מן  
הספק, אבל שבתי וראיתי את כל העשוקים אשר נעשים תחת השמש,  
תחת ממשלת אל אמונ' טהור עינים מראות ברע, ועם כל זה אני  
רואה שהעשוקים צוכים ונאנחים במר נפשו, ואין להם מנוח,  
ועושקיהם מכריחים אותם בכה ותוקף שבידם אל כל אשר ירנו והם  
כפופים תחת ידיהם ואין להם מנוח, וכ"ש מושיע ותומך, ואם כן  
הוא אין ספק שהדבר כאשר אמרנו, כי עת לכל חפץ ולכל מעשה  
שם, והאלהים יביא את העושק והנעשק במשפט, וישיב להם כגמולם.

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Chap. ix. 3. "ט." ג, page 284.

זה רע, אם ישאר הדבר הזה כמות שהוא בזה"ו בלי פתרון  
החלום, בודאי זה רע גמור ומוחלט כי מקרה אחד לכל, כפי אשר  
אנו רואים תחת השמש על הארץ, אין הבדלה בין עושה הטוב לחוטא,  
לדקת הנדיק ורשעת הרשע כחלום תעופינה, בלי תועלת לטוב, ובלי  
נוק לחוטא, השופט כל הארץ לא יעשה משפט?, חלילה לאל מעול  
ושדי מרשע, והרי אין לך עול ורשע וחמס מהיות מקרה אחד לנדיק  
ולרשע בכל המציאות כלו בלי הבדלה ובלי נשיאות פנים: והנה מן  
הטענה הזאת יהי' ח"ו השם מעות משפט נגד הנדיק, והוסיף עוד  
טענה שניה, שגם נגד החוטא המלליח יהי' עול בחיק השם אם לא

נאמין בהשגרת הנפשות והגמול, כי גם זה רעה גדולה ועול שיהי' לב בני האדם מלא רע והוללות בלבבם בחייהם, ואחריו אל המתים, ישובו לשאולה ויאבדו לנצח, ולא יוסרו, ולא יוטרפו כלרוף כסף, למען ידעו ויבינו כי לא טוב עשו, כי הלכו אחרי ההבל, ולא הבדילו בין טוב מדומה לטוב קיים ונאמן, בודאי אין זה פועל חכם, שיבדא נפשות משכילום, הוד היצירה ותפארתה, ויניחם להיות מלא רע והוללות ימים מועטים ואחרי כן ילכו אל המתים ויכלו בלי תקומה ובאפס תקוה, אם בריאה יבדא האלהים להרע לו, ולהנקם ממנו נקמה שאין אחריה תקומה? או אין ימלא תחת ממשלת בעל הרחמים אדם חי שיהי' מליאותו רעה גמורה ומוחלטת? .

### יב".יא" Chap. xii. 11.

כי דברי החכמים הם כדרבונות תחובות בלבב השומע המשכיל, ובעלי אסופות הם הלוקטי' מפי ספרים ומפי סופרים דברי חכמה ומחברים מהם חבורים, אמר מדברי בעלי אסופות הללו כמסמרות נטועים וקבועי' בנפש האדם, ואי אפשר מבלתי שיעשו רושם מה, כאשר אמר החכם למלך הכוזר, נפשות השומעות מקבלות רושם על ידי תוכחת המוכיח כאשר יוכיח בדברי' מקובלים, ויש לכל תוכחה באמת תועלת על כל פנים, ואם לפעמים איננה משיבה את הממרה מעשות הרע הנה תקדח בנפשו מדברי' התוכחת ההיא כמו ניגון אש, ורואה כי המעשה ההוא רע, וזהו חלק והתחלה מן התשובה ע"ש: נתנו מרועה אחד, יתכן שיהי' מענין מחשבה כמו בנת לרעי מרחוק, (תהלים קל"ט) יאמר שכל המשלים והמאמרים וכללי' החכמה אף שהם מלוקטים מספרים הרבה, הנה כלם יסכימו לדבר אחד ללמד לאדם דעת חכמה ומוסר, כאלו נתנו כלם מרועה ומוקר אחד.



The following is a specimen of the **באור הפלות**, or "Verbal Commentary," see p. 274, Note to vii. 16.

תשומס, הוא מבנין התפעל ודגש השי"ן לחסרון תי"ו התפעל, אף  
 שלא תבא תי"ו התפעל לפני אותיות וס"סן כי אם לאחריהם, והראוי  
 תשתומס, אף על פי כן יתכן שיבא דגש בשי"ן להורות על חסרונה,  
 כי כאן הי' מקומה, לולי קריאת האותיות שלא יתכן כן, גם אפשר  
 שיהי' מבנין נפעל בגזרת נחי העי"ן וכפולי הלמ"ד, אשר יקראה בנין  
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